

1. 7:00 P.M. Planning Commission July 2020 Regular Meeting Agenda

Documents:

- 01 - JULY 2020 AGENDA UPDATED.PDF
- 02 - VIRTUAL MEETING NOTICE.PDF
- 03 - JUNE 2020 MINUTES.PDF
- 04 - TEXT AMENDMENT STAFF REPORT AND APPLICATION.PDF
- 05 - MASTER PLAN UPDATE PACKET.PDF
- 06 - HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE REPORT.PDF
- 07 - BYLAWS AMENDMENT.PDF
- 08 - NMAC DOCUMENTS.PDF
- JULY 2020 FULL PACKET.PDF

Agenda
Planning Commission - Virtual Meeting
Wednesday, 15 July 2020 – 7:00 P.M.

Please be advised that due to COVID-19, City Hall will not be open to the public. This meeting will be held electronically on a video conferencing application in accordance with Governor Whitmer's Executive Order. The access code is posted in the Public Notice on www.cityofypsilanti.com and attached in the packet. The public may choose to participate during Audience Participation or the Public Hearing through the video conferencing application, or may submit e-mailed comments to aaamodt@cityofypsilanti.com by 4 pm, July 15.

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

Matt Dunwoodie, Chair	P	A
Jared Talaga, Vice-Chair	P	A
Eric Bettis	P	A
Michael Borsellino	P	A
Mike Davis Jr.	P	A
Jessica Donnelly	P	A
Phil Hollifield	P	A
Heidi Jugenitz	P	A
Michael Simmons	P	A

III. Approval of Minutes

- June 17, 2020 Meeting

IV. Audience Participation

Open for general public comment to Planning Commission on items for which a public hearing is not scheduled. Please limit to five minutes.

V. Presentations and Public Hearing Items

- Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment: Medical marijuana provisioning centers and recreational marijuana retailers as a special land use in Neighborhood Corridor zoning districts.
 - Public Hearing

VI. Old Business

VII. New Business

- Master Plan: Draft Update
 - Housing Affordability and Accessibility Committee Report and Recommendations
- Draft Bylaws Amendment

VIII. Future Business Discussion / Updates

IX. Committee Reports

- Non-Motorized Committee Report
 - Planning Commission Representative
- Housing Affordability and Accessibility Committee Report

X. Adjournment



**PUBLIC NOTICE
CITY OF YPSILANTI
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING – VIRTUAL MEETING**

The Ypsilanti Planning Commission will hold a virtual meeting on Wednesday, July 15, 2020 at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held in accordance with Governor Whitmer's Executive Order 2020-129.

The Planning Commission meeting is being held virtually in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The meeting can be attended through the below link, or through the below toll free numbers.

July 15, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Virtual Access Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81114114429>

When prompted, enter **Meeting ID:** 811 1411 4429

July 15, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Toll Free Phone Number Access

877 853 5257 US Toll-free
888 475 4499 US Toll-free

When prompted, enter the **Meeting ID:** 811 1411 4429, followed by the #, press # again to be connected.

The public will be able to make comment during *Audience Participation* or the *Public Hearing*. To address the Planning Commission, meeting participants will need to "raise their hand" to indicate they want to speak.

To raise your hand while participating online, click the "Raise Hand" icon at the bottom of the Zoom Screen or press *9 via phone. After you raise your hand you will be informed when it is your turn to speak, and your microphone will be unmuted at that time. Your microphone will be muted again when you have finished your comments or when your speaking time has expired.

Instructions for Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities who need accommodations to effectively participate in the meeting should contact the City Clerk, Andrew Hellenga at ahellenga@cityofypsilanti.com by 5:00 p.m. on the day before the meeting to request assistance. Closed Captions will be provided during the meeting.

City Clerk's Office
One South Huron Street
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197
(734) 483-1100

Andrew Hellenga
City Clerk
Posted: July 9, 2020

MEETING MINUTES
Planning Commission
Wednesday, 17 June 2020 – 7:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting

Please be advised that due to COVID-19, City Hall will not be open to the public. This meeting will be held electronically on a video conferencing application in accordance with Governor Whitmer's Executive Order. The access code is posted in the Public Notice on www.cityofypsilanti.com and attached in the packet. The public may choose to participate during Audience Participation or the Public Hearing through the video conferencing application, or may submit e-mailed comments to aaamodt@cityofypsilanti.com by 4 pm, June 17.

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

Matt Dunwoodie, Chair	P
Jared Talaga, Vice-Chair	P
Eric Bettis	P
Michael Borsellino	P
Mike Davis Jr.	P
Jessica Donnelly	P
Phil Hollifield	P
Heidi Jugenitz	P
Michael Simmons	A

III. Approval of Minutes

- May 20, 2020 Meeting
Motion to approve.
Offered By: Commissioner Hollifield; Seconded By: Commissioner Davis Jr.
Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)

IV. Audience Participation

Open for general public comment to Planning Commission on items for which a public hearing is not scheduled. Please limit to five minutes.

Motion to open audience participation.

Offered By: Commissioner Hollifield; Seconded By: Commissioner Donnelly
Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)

Two residents spoke during Audience Participation.

Motion to close audience participation.

Offered By: Commissioner Hollifield; Seconded By: Commissioner Donnelly.
Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)

V. Presentations and Public Hearing Items

- Limited Site Plan Review: Marihuana Retailer, 50 Ecorse Rd.

Staff presentation by City Planner Andy Aamodt.

This was a tabled case from May 6th, 2020. The applicant and the architect sat down and provided staff with a new, consistent site plan.

Proposed changes for sidewalk including ramps. Pedestrian entry markers from the sidewalks. They proposed resurfacing and striping of the lot.

The fence will be repaired, and landscaping will not be removed.

Staff recommends approval of the limited site plan.

Applicant: Jim Garmo, Property owner of 50 Ecorse – Do we need a ramp for every curb? If someone comes from the bus or McDonalds, there would be a ramp to get to the stores. We did not provide a ramp at the other locations, because you would end up in the street.

Commissioner Talaga pointed out that there is a potential of connectivity of the sidewalk in the future, and would like to see the other sidewalk entries.

Commissioner Donnelly agreed that if a curb cut was being made at one entry, then all three entries should have a curb cut.

*Motion that the Planning Commission **approve** the Limited Site Plan for the Capital Solutions Ypsilanti, LLC (Green Vitality) existing facility at 50 Ecorse Rd. with the following findings:*

Findings

1. The application substantially complies with §122-310.

2. The existing building and site design are nonconforming under §122-352.

Conditions

1. The applicant must provide wheelchair accessible curb cuts at all three sidewalk entries on the site.

Offered By: Commissioner Talaga; Seconded By: Commissioner Donnelly.

Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)

VI. Old Business n/a

VII. New Business

- Election of Officers

Motion to approve Matt Dunwoodie as Chair of the commission.

Offered By: Commissioner Talaga; Seconded By: Commissioner Davis Jr.

Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)

Motion to approve Jared Talaga as Vice-Chair of the commission.

Offered By: Commissioner Dunwoodie; Seconded By: Commissioner Hollifield

Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)

Commissioner Talaga volunteered to continue serving on the ZBA

- Bylaws Discussion

Andy Aamodt shared conflict of interest policies in other cities.

Commissioner Jugenitz wants to see any policy on conflict of interest to be consistent.

Commissioner Dunwoodie agreed that having to leave the room during a presentation sets up the commissioner to be the only City resident not allowed to view the presentation.

Consensus on allowing commissioners with a conflict of interest to stay in the room during a presentation, providing written comment before a meeting but prohibiting comment during public comment, and leaving the room during the deliberation and vote.

Andy Aamodt will work on a draft of the change that can be brought back for a vote.

VIII. Future Business Discussion / Updates n/a

IX. Committee Reports

- Non-Motorized Committee Report
 - Approval of Members
Bob Krzewinski of the Non-Motorized Committee recommends Renee Echols for the committee.
Jared Talaga asked the commission for someone to take his place in the committee as a PC representative. Mike Davis Jr. volunteered to take the role.

Motion to approve Renee Echols for the Non-Motorized Committee.

**Offered By: Commissioner Donnelly; Seconded By: Commissioner Jugenitz
Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)**

- Master Plan: Housing Affordability and Access Committee Report
 - Executive Summary and Survey Findings
Commissioner Jugenitz updated the commission about the committee work. There will be dedicated time for a full presentation at next months meeting. Executive summary of the report is in this packet. There are also survey results in todays packet, along with strategies. She urges commissioners to read these materials before the next meeting.
Commissioner Donnelly asked about the legality of rent control in Ypsilanti. The committee will likely recommend the city advocate for rent control legislation at the state level.
The commission discussed the integration of reports into the upcoming master plan.

X. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

**Offered By: Commissioner Hollifield; Seconded By: Commissioner Donnelly
Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)**



July 15, 2020

**Text Amendment Staff Review
Marijuana Facilities in Neighborhood Corridor**

GENERAL INFORMATION

Applicant: Crown V LLP

Action Requested: Applicant requests zoning text amendment to Chapter 122: Article IV, Division 3, Subdivision III (§122-451). Text amendment would make medical marijuana provisioning centers and recreational marijuana retailers permissible as a special land use in Neighborhood Corridor zoning districts.

SUMMARY

Neighborhood Corridors (NC) zoning districts do not currently allow for medical marijuana provisioning centers or recreational marijuana retailers. This text amendment would make such uses permissible as special land uses, where applications for special use permits may be reviewed by Planning Commission on a case-by-case basis.

Figures 1 and 2: Captures of existing §122-451 Permissible Uses chart

Medical or dental clinics, less than 10,000 square feet	P	P	P		
Medical or dental clinics, 10,000 square feet or more	S	S	P		
Medical Marijuana Provisioning Centers	--	--	S		Section 122-537
Veterinary hospitals and clinics	--	S	S		Section 122-558
Kennels, commercial	--	--	S		Section 122-535

Firearms Sales Establishments	--	--	S		Section 122-527
Designated consumption establishment	--	--	S		Section 122-522
Recreational marijuana retailer	--	--	S		Section 122-550
RESTAURANTS					
Carry-out and/or delivery restaurant	--	P	P		
Café or coffee shop	P	P	P		

Zoning text amendments are reviewed by Planning Commission, who then gives a recommendation to City Council. The recommendation is made via motion, and also involves a report that will be transmitted to City Council. City Council has the ultimate authority to adopt the text amendment.

BACKGROUND

The existing zoning regulations pertaining to recreational marijuana were adopted by City Council in January of this year.

The applicant is applying because of recreational marijuana retailer interest at their property, 121 E. Michigan Ave. However, this application is not for a rezoning, rather a text amendment, so all of NC should be considered.

Medical marijuana provisioning centers and recreational marijuana retailers' regulations are mirrored in terms of zoning district allowed, level of approval, and distances from each other. Both uses must also be located at least 500 feet away from one another. They were meant to mirror each other because the state defines these as equivalent license types. A licensed medical marijuana provisioning center may be licensed as a recreational marijuana retailer, and vice versa. Most, if not all of the City's seven medical marijuana provisioning centers have applied to become permitted as a recreational marijuana retailer, too. Therefore, amending regulations of one should mean amending regulations of both; they are essentially a package deal.

For the purpose of this staff report, medical marijuana provisioning centers and recreational marijuana retailers will be grouped together and known as "subject facilities" throughout this staff report.

Figure 3: Where and How Subject Facilities are Permitted

<i>P=Principal, A=Accessory, S=Special Land Use, -- = Not Permitted</i>					
USES	C	NC	GC	NOTES	SPECIFIC REGULATIONS
Medical marijuana provisioning center	P	--	S		Section 122-537
Recreational marijuana retailer	P	--	S		Section 122-550

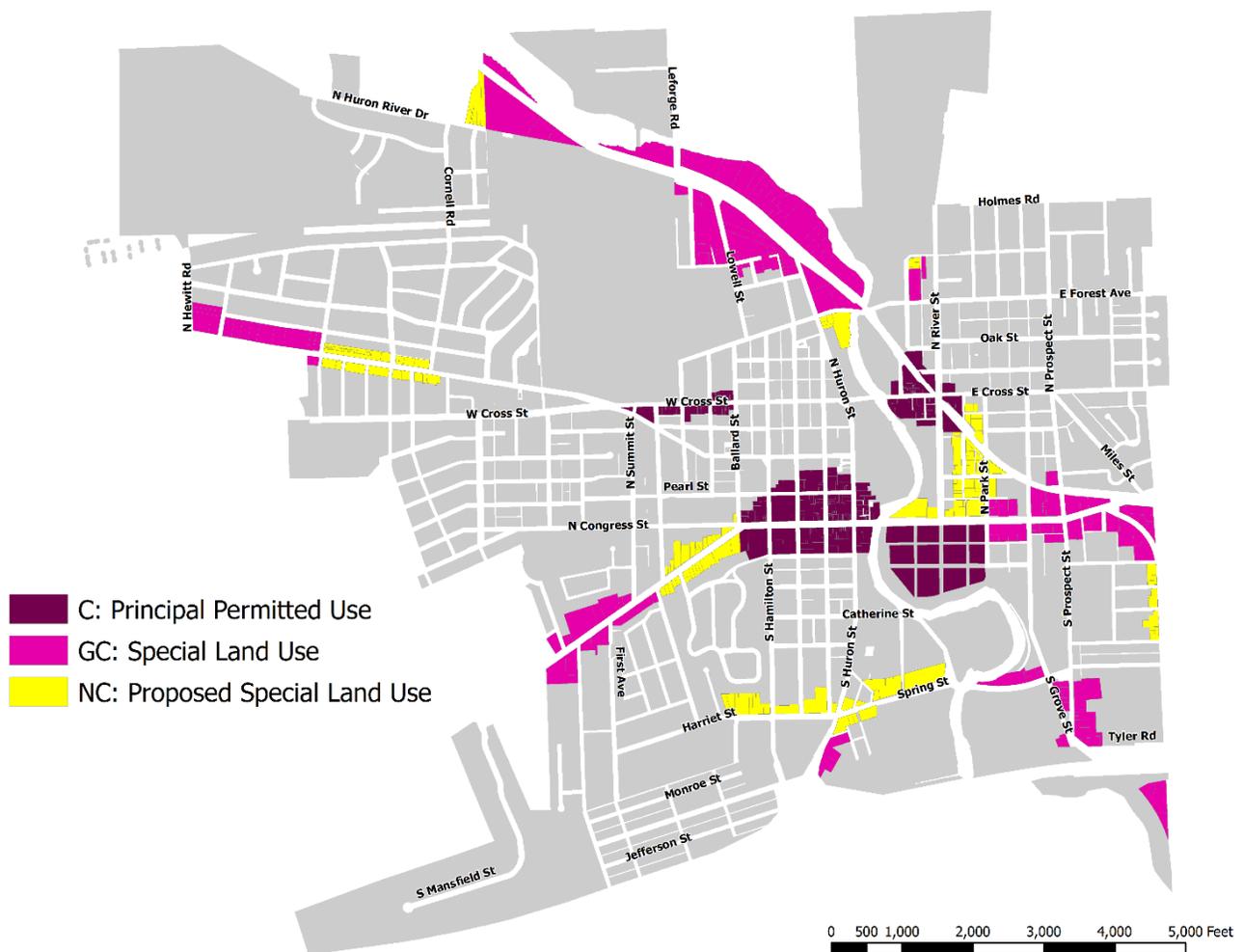
DISCUSSION

Through prior medical and recreational marijuana zoning regulations, the City has restricted uses to certain zoning districts and imposed certain buffer regulations. With this in mind, it has never been the City’s intent to allow marijuana everywhere, rather in appropriate zoning districts with buffers that prevent clustering of facilities. Staff recommends keeping the 500 feet buffer requirement from one subject facility to another subject facility.

Neighborhood Corridors are rather mixed-use zoning districts that entertain a range of uses. More intense special land uses in NC are: wholesale or distribution facility (gross floor area of less than 16,000 square feet); automobile filling stations without repair; bars; and food stores with the sale of alcohol (less than 15,000 square feet). There are a handful of liquor stores (classified as *food stores with the sale of alcohol*) within NC zoning districts.

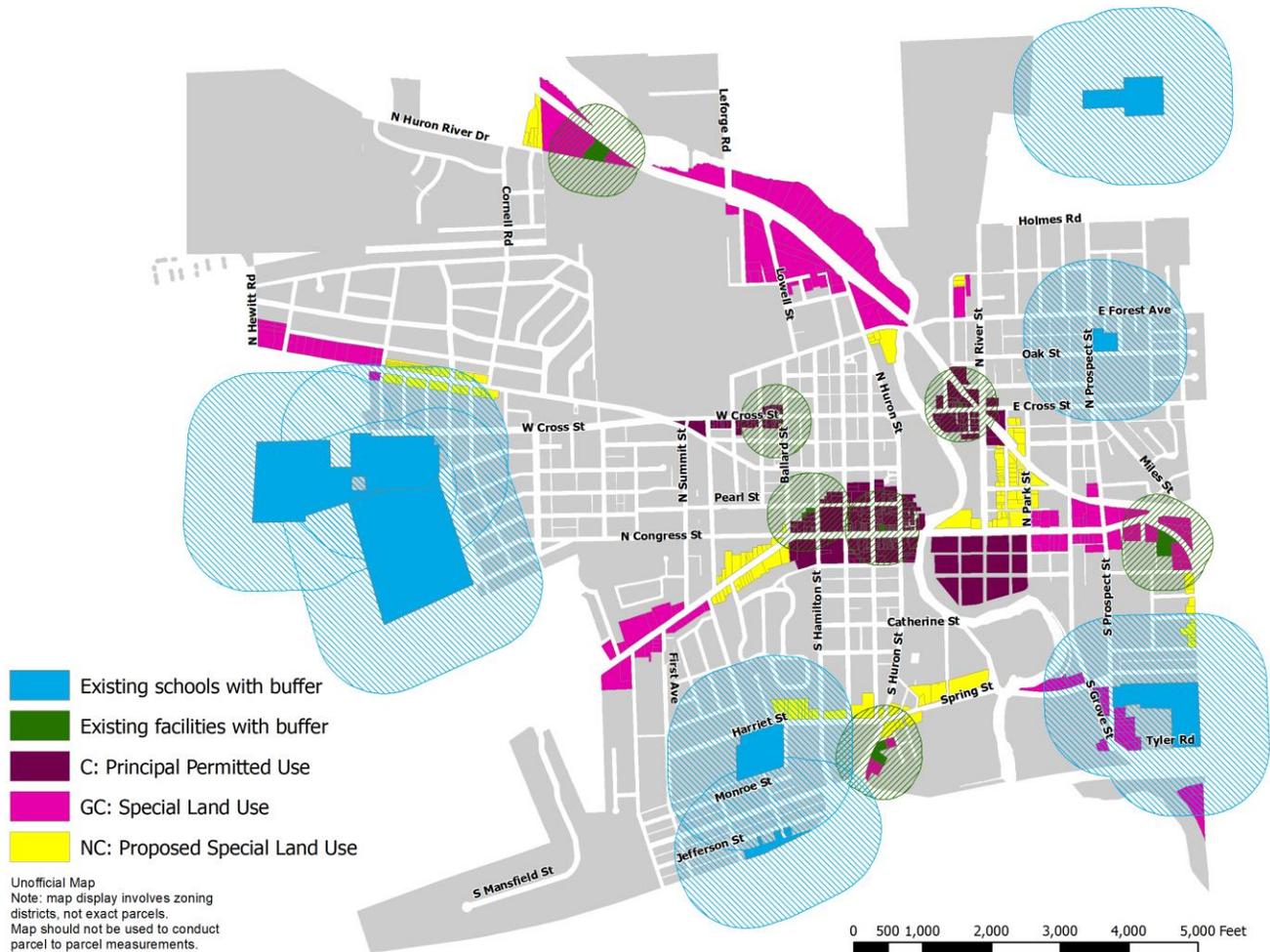
Considering the geographic location of NC zoning districts, these are often areas that link Center (C) and General Corridor (GC) zoning districts. See Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Map of Relevant Zoning Districts



Relating to required 500 feet buffers from one subject facility to the next, and 1,000 feet buffers from schools, see Figure 5 below. The school buffer substantially imposes on the potential NC properties on Harriet St. and Washtenaw Ave., leaving E. Michigan Ave. and the N. Park area, as well as E. Michigan Ave. as the primary potential areas for this amendment. Additionally, small areas at N. Huron and Forest, N. Huron River Drive, Spring St. area, and Emerick St. would open up as potential areas too.

Figure 5: Potential Locations of Subject Facilities



Additionally, as a *Walkable Urban District*, Neighborhood Corridor zoning districts do not just regulate the use involved, but the building type as well. That means the use is not solely important; how the use is physically developed into a building and a site is just as important. NC districts generally have smaller lot sizes than their GC relatives and have more dense surrounding neighborhoods, yet have a minimum base parking requirement unlike their Center counterparts (granted, the zoning ordinance does provide for parking reductions and Planning Commission may waive requirements in some instances). Therefore, staff believes it is sensible to limit the building size, and require a 5,000 square foot maximum gross floor area for the subject facility. Some other uses, including food stores, business and professional offices, auto repair, and medical or dental clinics, to name a few, have a maximum square footage in NC districts.

Using an existing facility, Oz Cannabis at 19 N. Hamilton, as an example- this would be an appropriately-sized example for a potential facility in NC. The building's footprint is approximately 4,000 square feet, so assuming just a singular floor would be used for provisioning center or retailer purposes, this would comply with a 5,000 square feet maximum. From a form-based standpoint, this facility would fit well into NC areas. See Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Example of a Preferred-Sized Facility



STANDARDS FOR AMENDMENTS

§122-362(a)

(a) Text Amendment. For a change to the text of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Commission shall consider and the City Council may consider, whether the proposed amendment meets the following standards:

(1) The proposed amendment is consistent with the guiding values of the Master Plan; and Applicable guiding values of the Master Plan include:

- *Diversity is our strength:* This maintains and potentially improves the diversity of the mix of businesses in Ypsilanti.
- *Ypsilanti is sustainable:* this action maintains, and has the potential to create, job opportunities for Ypsilantians.

- *Great place to do business, especially green and creative:* This action retains and fosters the growth of local businesses.

(2) The rezoning is consistent with description and purpose of the proposed district; and

The amendment will be consistent with what Neighborhood Corridor zoning districts already provide for. It is safe to say there are more intense uses already allowed in NC in terms of use, but also in terms of hours of operations, noise, disposal of waste, etc. As stated in §122-450, the intent of NC is to be a corridor that is "mixed-use" and "commercial" located "along the arteries of the City, such as Washtenaw, Huron, Hamilton, Michigan, Harriet, and River."

(3) The proposed amendment is consistent with the intent of this Zoning Ordinance; and

The amendment will be consistent with the intent of the zoning ordinance. Per §122-100, the intent of the ordinance is to promote the public health, safety, and welfare. In particular, to:

- create a safe, diverse, and sustainable city;
- guide the location of places of residence, recreation, industry, trade, service, and other uses of land;
- ensure that uses of the land shall be situated in appropriate locations and relationships;
- limit the inappropriate overcrowding of land and congestion of population and transportation systems and other public facilities.

(4) The proposed amendment will enhance the functionality, transportation network or character of the future development in the City; and

Staff does not anticipate that this amendment will have an impact on the functionality or transportation network in the City. However, marijuana uses have the potential to re-use traditionally vacant or distressed buildings in the City.

(5) The proposed amendment will preserve the historic nature of the surrounding area and of the City; and

Staff does not anticipate that this amendment will negatively affect the historic nature of the City.

(6) The proposed amendment will enhance the natural features and environmental sustainability of the City; and

Staff does not anticipate that this amendment will negatively affect the natural features or environmental sustainability of the City.

(7) The proposed amendment will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public; or

Staff does not anticipate that this amendment will negatively affect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public.

(8) The proposed amendment is needed to correct an error or omission in the original text; or

This amendment does not correct an error.

(9) The proposed amendment will address a community need in physical or economic conditions or development practices; and

Staff anticipates this change may provide for the potential re-use of properties, activating properties for tax capture and improving property values.

(10) The proposed amendment will not result in the creation of significant nonconformities in the City.

The proposed amendment will not result in a significant creation of nonconformities.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission recommend **approval** of the proposed text amendment to Chapter 122: Article IV, Division 3, Subdivision III (§122-451). with the following condition and findings:

Condition:

- The proposed text amendment be revised as follows:
 - Medical marijuana provisioning centers, less than 5,000 square feet of gross floor area permissible as a special land use in Neighborhood Corridor
 - Recreational marijuana retailer, less than 5,000 square feet of gross floor area permissible as a special land use in Neighborhood Corridor

Findings:

1. The proposed amendment is consistent with the guiding values of the Master Plan;
2. The rezoning is consistent with description and purpose of the proposed district;
3. The proposed amendment is consistent with the intent of this Zoning Ordinance;
4. The proposed amendment will enhance the character of the future development in the City;
5. The proposed amendment will address a community need in physical or economic conditions or development practices.

Andy Aamodt
City Planner, City of Ypsilanti

c.c. File



Memo

To: Planning Commissioners
From: Andy Aamodt, City Planner
Date: July 15, 2020
Subject: Drafted Master Plan Update

BACKGROUND

The Shape Ypsilanti Master Plan was adopted in 2013. In 2018, Planning Commission decided an update to the Master Plan ("the Plan") was necessary. The City chose Beckett & Raeder, Inc. as planning consultants for this update. Intent to plan notices were sent in June of 2019.

Two large themes arose and became the topic of current Master Plan planning efforts: sustainability, and housing affordability/accessibility. These themes are currently being worked on. The sustainability aspect will be a whole new chapter in the plan. The Sustainability Commission has reviewed a draft of the proposed Sustainability Chapter but has not yet approved a draft yet. The Housing Affordability and Accessibility Committee has performed surveys and drafted an executive summary but has not yet finalized a report. These two large themes will continue to be planned for, and when ready, will also be added and incorporated into the Master Plan. If their timelines run concurrently, these can both be part of an update we might call "Update B."

On top of the aforementioned themes, the City chose to conduct a general update as well, with a few smaller themes such as accessory dwellings, transportation updates, and potential redevelopment sites. This draft update addresses these smaller themes, and a general update of statistics, maps, and figures. This is the update before Planning Commission at the moment, an update we might call "Update A."

UPDATE "A" DETAILS

Because this is an update, not a new plan, this document will have original 2013 text combined with new text. For the most part, the new text is displayed in **purple**. This is especially the case in chapters 4-9 which underwent the most substantial updating. *Chapter 3 – Ypsilanti Now* was largely updated too, but because it is a chapter with extensive population and demographic statistics, new text or statistics are not highlighted in purple.

As part of this update we (City staff) attempted to track what plans and policy we have done, and what we have not done, by marking “completed” or “ongoing” next to their individual headers.

A few new plans/policy sections have been added. These sections include: a re-survey of the Historic District (Chapter 7), opportunities for accessory dwelling units (Chapter 7), Bell-Kramer land uses (Chapter 7), and the potential redevelopment sites of 220 N. Park and 1901 Huron River Drive (Chapter 10).

NEXT STEPS

Once Planning Commission recommends City Council distribution of this Master Plan update, this will be placed on a City Council agenda. City Council will then make the decision on distribution. The Plan will have a distribution period of 63 days, where the public and different agencies may submit comment. Then, after the 63 day window, Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the update. Planning Commission may then choose to adopt the Plan. If City Council asserts the right to adopt the Master Plan update, via resolution, then City Council is the ultimate adopting authority. See the attached *Master Plan Adoption Process* flowchart by Beckett & Raeder, Inc. for reference.

In the coming months, Planning Commission may also see “Update B,” which will go through the same process.

Note: the original Shape Ypsilanti Master Plan can be found [here](#).

MASTER PLAN ADOPTION PROCESS

Per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008

B R 
Beckett&Raeder

1 Planning Commission Initiates Update

The Planning Commission is the author of the master plan. It must review the master plan every 5 years and then decide whether to begin the process of amending the existing plan or adopting a new plan. The review findings must be recorded in the Planning Commission meeting minutes [MCL 125.3845(2)].

2 Intent to Plan Notifications

BRI sends out Intent to Plan notifications via first class mail, inviting comment from recipients. Notifications go to all entities listed in [MCL 125.3839(2)] including: neighboring municipalities; regional and county planning commissions; public utility, railroad, and public transportation agencies; county road commissions, and the state transportation department.

3 Plan Submittal to Elected Body

After preparing the master plan, the Planning Commission submits a request (via a motion) to the elected body for distribution of the proposed master plan to the same entities initially contacted for the Intent to Plan notifications [MCL 125.3841(1)].

4 Distribution Approval

The elected body approves distribution of the proposed master plan (via formal resolution) for public and agency review, which sets the clock for the comment period: 63 days for a new plan or plan update [MCL 125.3841(3)] or 42 days for a minor plan amendment [MCL 125.3845 (1)(b)].

5 Master Plan Distribution

BRI sends the proposed master plan by first class mail, personal delivery, or electronic delivery for public and agency review [MCL 125.3841(2)].

6 Review & Comment Period

All entities that received notification may submit comments during the comment period. It is best practice to make the plan available for public review during this period [MCL 125.3841(3)].

7 Public Hearing & Notice

The Planning Commission holds a public hearing on the proposed master plan at the end of the comment period. At least 15 days prior, the Planning Commission must give notice of the time and place of the public hearing to the general public via newspaper publication and to the entities that received a copy of the proposed master plan amendment [MCL 125.3843(1)].

8 Planning Commission Master Plan Approval

The Planning Commission approves the master plan by resolution, with affirmative votes from at least 2/3 of its members for a city or village and a majority of its members for a township or county. [MCL 125.3843(2)]. Planning Commission approval of the proposed master plan is the final step in the adoption process, unless the elected body has asserted the right to approve or reject the master plan (see step 9). If this is the case, the Planning Commission recommends that the elected body adopts the plan [MCL 125.3843(3)].

9 Optional: Elected Body Master Plan Approval

An elected body may, by resolution, assert the right to approve or reject the proposed master plan (the municipality's clerk is responsible for maintaining a record of resolutions). If this is the case, then the elected body adopts the master plan by resolution. [MCL 125.3843(3)].

June 24, 2019

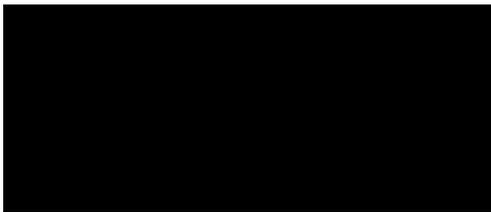
Regarding: Ypsilanti Master Plan

To whom it may concern:

This letter is to provide notification to your office that the City of Ypsilanti will begin the process of writing a Master Plan pursuant to Public Act 33 of 2008, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

Once a draft plan is approved for distribution, you will be provided a link to an electronic copy for your organization's review and comment. Please feel free to contact me about any land use or community development issues pertinent to your organization, or to the participating community, which should be reviewed during the preparation of the plan.

Regards,



John Iacoangeli, AICP, PCP, LEED AP, CNU-A



Enclosure: List of organizations and entities receiving this notification

Notification of Intent to Prepare a Master Plan

Organizations and Entities Receiving this Notice:

Ypsilanti Charter Township
Superior Township
Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
Washtenaw County
Washtenaw County Road Commission
Ypsilanti Community Schools
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti District Library
Michigan Department of Transportation
Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority
Norfolk Southern Corporation
Amtrak Corporation
DTE Energy Company
AT&T
Comcast Corporation
Ypsilanti Community Utilities
Consolidated Railroad
Washtenaw Area Transportation Study
SBC Communications

FIGURES & MAPS LIST

Page	Title		
7	Map 1: Regional Context, City of Ypsilanti, Michigan	Complete	Added
19	Figure 1: Total Population, Ypsilanti City 1900-2024	Pending	
19	Figure 2: Eastern Michigan University Enrollment 1910-2018	Pending	
19	Figure 3: Age, Ypsilanti & Adjacent Communities, 2017	Pending	
19	Map 2: City of Ypsilanti Median Age, 2017	Pending	
21	Map 3: Percent Minority	Complete	Added
21	Map 4: Percent Bachelors Degree or Higher	Complete	Added
21	Map 5: Per Capita Income	Complete	Added
22	Map 6: Rental & Owner Occupied Housing, 2019	Complete	Added
22	Figure 4: Housing Tenure for University Towns	Complete	Added
24	Map 7: Housing Units by Type, 2019	Complete	Added
25	Figure 5: Household Tenure by Age, 2017	Pending	
25	Figure 6: Taxable Market Value by Census Tract, 2019	Pending	
26	Map 8: Residential Structure Age, 2019	Complete	Added
27	Map 9: Size of Dwelling Unit, 2019	Complete	Added
30	Figure 7: Housing Market Analysis	Pending	
33	Figure 8: Change Number of Employees in Washtenaw County	Complete	Added
36	Figure 9: Major Taxpayers, 1999-2020	Complete	Added
39	Figure 10: Non-Motorized Deficiencies, 2013	Existing	Added
41	Map 10: AAATA Fixed Route Service Coverage in Ypsilanti	Existing	Added
43	Figure 11: Intersection Traffic Volumes	Complete	Added
44	Figure 12: Intersections and Mode Share Data for Select Ypsilanti Intersections	Complete	Added
46	Figure 13: Annual Crash Rate, 2014-2018	Complete	Added
49	Map 11: Framework Map for City of Ypsilanti	Complete	Added
54	Map 12: Transportation Project Map	Existing	Added
57	Figure 14: Roundabout for Two-Way Conversion	Existing	Added
58	Figure 15: Curbless "Festival" Street Example	Existing	Added
63	Map 13: Centers Map for City of Ypsilanti	Complete	Added
67	Figure 16: Concept TOD Plan for Depot Town	Existing	Added
72	Figure 17: Reconfiguration of Cross & Washtenaw	Existing	Added
74	Figure 18: Centers Implementation Matrix	Complete	Added
76	Map 14: Neighborhoods Map for City of Ypsilanti	Complete	Added
82	Figure 19: Neighborhoods Implementation Matrix	Complete	Added
84	Map 15: Corridors Map for City of Ypsilanti	Complete	Added
88	Figure 20: Corridors Implementation Matrix	Complete	Added
90	Map 16: Districts Map for City of Ypsilanti	Complete	Added
93	Figure 21: Districts Implementation Matrix	Complete	Added
96	Figure 22: Water Street Concept Plan	Existing	Added

98	Figure 23: Water Street "A" and "B" Streets	Existing	Added
99	Figure 24: Sidewalk with Furnishing Zones	Existing	Added
99	Figure 25: Driveway Apron Example	Existing	Added
100	Figure 26: Water Street "A" Street Cross Section	Existing	Added
100	Figure 27: Water Street "B" Street Cross Section	Existing	Added
102	Figure 28: Bay Logistics Concept Plan	Existing	Added
104	Figure 29: Angstrom Property Concept Plan	Existing	Added
108	Figure 30: Zoning Plan	Existing	Added

SHAPE YPSILANTI

Title Page

To be formatted during new formatting/design.

DRAFT

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Acknowledgements

A special thanks to all who gave their time, energy and input to make this plan possible, especially

SHAPE YPSILANTI STEERING COMMITTEE

Rod Johnson, Planning Commission Chair
Richard Murphy, Planning Commission Vice-Chair
Phil Hollifield, Planning Commissioner
Pete Murdock, City Council Member, Ward 3
Ricky Jefferson, City Council Member, Ward 1
Anne Stevenson, Historic District Commission, Ward 2
D'Real Graham, Recreation Commission
Leigh Greden, EMU Administration, DDA Chair & Eastern Leaders' Group
Co-Chair
Bee Roll, Owner of beezy's cafe
Teresa Gillotti, City Planner at City of Ypsilanti
Desmond Miller, EMU student & Student Council President

YPSILANTI CITY COUNCIL

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Lois Richardson, Mayor Pro-Tem, Ward 1
Ricky Jefferson, Ward 1
Susan Moeller, Ward 2
Daniel Vogt, Ward 2
Peter Murdock, Ward 3
Brian Robb, Ward 3

CITY OF YPSILANTI PLANNING COMMISSION

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Richard Murphy, Vice-Chair
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Phil Hollifield
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Gary Clark
Brett Lenart
Cherly Zuellig
Daniel Lautenbach
Anthony Bedogne
Heidi Jugenitz

CITY STAFF

Ralph Lange, City Manager
Nan Schuette, Executive Secretary
Teresa Gillotti, Planner II
Bonnie Wessler, Planner I
Emily Baxter, Planning Assistant

ALL WHO PARTICIPATED

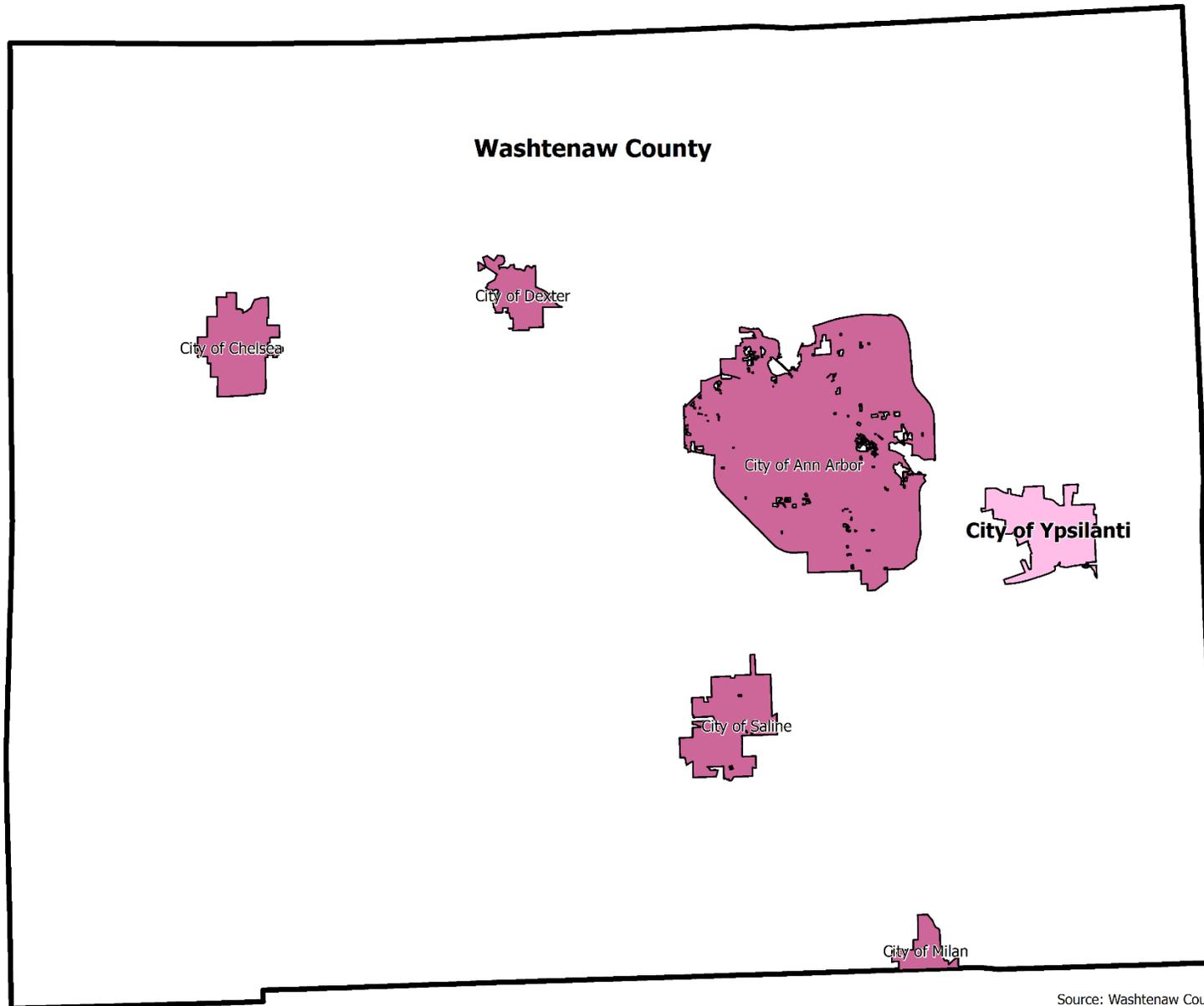
Over 400 focus group and charrette participants
2,038 people who like Shape Ypsi on Facebook
128 twitter followers
1,387 people who visited ShapeYpsi.com
155 e-mail newsletter subscribers
All the people who shared in this plan in thought, word and deed

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To be finalized with page numbers after new design/formatting.

DRAFT

Map 1: Regional Context, City of Ypsilanti



Chapter 1: Small City. Unique History. New Plan.

“After careful review of many recent local plans, the City requests that respondents set aside existing templates and consider instead new approaches to a hybrid policy/land-use plan for the City of Ypsilanti.” -Request for Proposal, City of Ypsilanti, July 2012

The City of Ypsilanti is a small city of 4.3 square miles in southeastern Michigan. Located in Washtenaw County, it is within 15 miles of Detroit Metro Airport, 10 miles of Ann Arbor and 35 miles from Detroit. A distinctly urban place, its population density is one of the highest in Washtenaw County, at roughly 6.4 people per acre.

Ypsilanti is a historic community. It was the second city to incorporate in the State of Michigan, and has the fifth largest historic district in the state. Eastern Michigan University (EMU) was founded here in 1849. Transportation features prominently in Ypsilanti’s history, with the Chicago Road and Michigan Central Railroad driving the growth of the city’s various industries through the 19th and early 20th century. In the mid-20th century, the Willow Run plant and airport, and I-94 and US-23 continued the city’s location advantages, while automotive plants in and around the city tied the city’s manufacturing economy to transportation as well.

EMU continues to be a major employer and economic driver. It is the largest land owner in the City and the largest taxpayers are now primarily rental property owners.

However, the City’s economy has fundamentally changed with the decline of the automotive industry and manufacturing. Since 2001, Ypsilanti has lost close to 1,600 manufacturing jobs. This economic shift has caused both a reduction in real and personal property tax revenue, and an increase in vacant or under utilized industrial spaces. No single industry has emerged to replace the jobs and taxes generated by the automobile industry.

Instead, several sectors have potential to bring new vitality – small manufacturing and craft production, creative economy, renewable energy, and food. Summer events are a regional draw, and more recent efforts such as the Krampus Festival and Mittenfest foster the growing arts and music communities. Solar Ypsi and other groups support renewable energy efforts, while the Historic District Commission has adopted guidelines for solar panels. A growing reputation among foodies also has helped Ypsilanti secure its place in the region for both

every day and destination restaurants. Growing food in the City is supported by non-profits like Growing Hope and permaculture groups.

The City prides itself on its diversity. Ypsilanti has been a leader in civil rights, as the first City in Michigan to pass a living wage ordinance and an ordinance banning discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodation based on sexual orientation, gender identity/transgender status, or body weight. The U.S. Census analysis of 2010 population data ranked Ypsilanti as one of the top 5 Michigan Cities for gay couples.

At the same time, the City faces challenges. Approximately 40% of the City’s land area is used by tax exempt owners, limiting the tax base of the City. The building stock, while historic and often a selling point for the community, can decline in value without upkeep. The foreclosure crisis and great recession of 2008 hit Ypsilanti, like many Michigan cities, with the loss of jobs and home values. The City has one of higher unemployment rates in Washtenaw County.

The first year for the merged Ypsilanti Community School District was 2013. Until the district is on its feet, the schools will have an unknown impact on housing values.

Finally, the City must pay about 10% of its current budget on bonds for the previous acquisition, building demolition, and environmental cleanup of Water Street, a redevelopment area assembled by the City more than a decade ago. The last Master Plan, adopted in 1998, assumed that industrial users would remain. The economic shifts and the housing crisis that have taken place since have changed that assumption. This plan assumes growth on a micro-economic level. It concentrates on the assets of the people, businesses, buildings, and infrastructure. It uses these assets to set the framework for future development, redevelopment and preservation in the community. The plan also lays the groundwork for form-based zoning in Ypsilanti, which will implement goals of the master plan through regulation by street type, building typology as well as use.

THE PROCESS & THE PLAN

In 2012, the City of Ypsilanti received funding to draft a master plan and zoning ordinance as part of the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Sustainable Community Challenge Grant awarded to Washtenaw County. While the City of Ypsilanti has a long history of planning (see list on this page), the last Master Plan was over a decade old. Due to the challenges facing the City, staff, elected and appointed officials requested the master plan recognize both the good and the bad, set realistic goals, and emphasize policy as well as land use.

After selecting a consultant team to assist in the process, the City launched a community-driven process, called “Shape Ypsilanti”, to create the Master Plan in January 2013. The process utilized social media and a website separate from the City’s own to engage, educate, and empower. Feedback from on-line sources was used as fodder for discussions and decisions at a series of events, varying in size from interviews to two rounds of focus groups to community-wide, four-day charrettes in March and April 2013. Events were attended by more than 400 individuals. In 2018, the City of Ypsilanti decided to update its master plan to keep in line with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 requirement to review the document every five years, to check its progress on its action items, and determine next steps for future projects. The largest update is the incorporation of a Sustainability chapter that focuses on practices and policies to build resiliency against environmental change. The City’s intent in adopting a Sustainability chapter as part of the Master Plan is to use a sustainability framework in long-term land use decisions, including zoning.

The following document is the resulting Master Plan, grounded in real challenges and opportunities. The plan is divided into the following chapters:

- Chapter 2 – Guiding Values
- Chapter 3 – Ypsilanti Now
- Chapter 4 – City Framework
- Chapter 5 – Transportation
- Chapter 6 – Centers

- Chapter 7 – Neighborhoods
- Chapter 8 – Corridors
- Chapter 9 – Districts
- Chapter 10 - Redevelopment Areas
- Chapter 11 - Implementation

The solutions were created by the community for the community. However, many of the requests brought forth - more police, cameras in high-crime areas, recreation and programs for youth, street maintenance and repair, better public schools - are not within the scope of this plan as prescribed by Michigan State Law. These pressing issues can, and perhaps should, take precedence in allocating scant municipal resources over many of the projects and plans laid out in this document.

PREVIOUS PLANS REVIEWED FOR THIS PROCESS

- Olmsted Brothers Park Plan (Pre-World War II)
- 1971 Ypsilanti I, II, III
- 1993 Blueprints for Downtown
- 1996 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan
- 1998 City Master Plan
- 2001 Cross Street Neighborhood Improvement Plan
- 2008 Recreation Plan
- 2008 Downtown Blueprint
- 2010 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan
- 2012 Climate Action Plan
- Washtenaw County Consolidated Plan
- Washtenaw County Affordable Housing Needs Assessment
- Ypsilanti 2020 Task Force Report
- ReImagine Washtenaw Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Strategy (2010)
- SEMCOG & Washtenaw County Community Economic Development Plan
- South of Michigan Avenue Community Needs Assessment
- 2018 Energy Plan
- 2015 Housing Affordability and Economic Equity Analysis
- Huron Watershed Council

Chapter 2: Guiding Values

“What would you whisper into the ears of decision makers, like City Council?”

-Instructions to participants in Guiding Values Focus Groups

Appointed and elected officials use the City’s Master Plan as a guide when making decisions with limited resources about land use, housing, transportation, equity, quality of life, and sustainability. Traditionally, decision-makers reference the Master Plan when deciding what uses should be allowed on a parcel of land, whether and how a building can be constructed or an older building renovated; and how bicycle routes and streets are laid out. The City of Ypsilanti requested the guiding values for this Master Plan go beyond the usual scope of a land use plan and apply to budget decisions, allocation of resources, and general policy for the City. This chapter provides a list of guiding values from the community and a decision-making rubric for City leaders, not only for land use but for over arching policy.

These guiding values are based on focus group sessions held in January and February 2013 and then presented to the public in the Discover Charrette in March of the same year. The sessions were held in different locations across the city. The over 50 participants represented Eastern Michigan students, business groups, historic preservation groups, real estate developers, arts groups, event organizers, churches, youth groups and residents from neighborhoods South of Michigan and on the west side of Ypsilanti. Two Saturday sessions were also held at a downtown restaurant for the general public.

The following ten values were mentioned by all the groups when they were asked what the guiding values should be for the City:

Safety comes first

The City is dedicated to being a secure place to live, study, work, visit, and play. While budgets for safety services are separate from the Master Plan, decisions about land use, housing, transportation, equity and sustainability should protect and enhance safety.

Diversity is our strength

Ypsilanti is a multicultural city with people from different races, sexual orientations, incomes, and walks of life. The ability to be who you are attracts

people to Ypsilanti. In decisions, the City will ask how actions welcome, provide opportunity for and sustain its diverse population.

Ypsilanti is sustainable

Every decision should foster the future, while replenishing resources – natural, economic and social. Efforts to make the city an environmentally sustainable place will continue. The financial viability of the city in 20 years should factor into decisions. Equity for everyone in Ypsilanti is another priority.

Communication is key

Information, especially from the City, should be shared with all neighborhoods and groups in the manner that will reach them, be that on the web, in the mail or via flyers. Programs should reach out to all, giving everyone a chance.

Anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti

Housing options should match the needs of the people. Those needs will change as residents age and move. The need for safe, quality, affordable homes for all should be factored into decisions.

Anyone can easily walk, bike, drive or take transit from anywhere in Ypsilanti and to anywhere else in Ypsilanti and beyond

The citizens of Ypsilanti want a complete transportation system with room on the roads for cars, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians, including those in wheelchairs or with strollers. The City is committed to integrating into the emerging regional transit system while enhancing the walkability of the community.

Ypsilanti is a great place to do business, especially the green and creative kind

The City of Ypsilanti will create a business environment that fosters the creativity and energy personified by City’s best known businesses, while attracting new businesses and fostering locally grown enterprises. Green and sustainable

businesses, like those that have already developed in Ypsilanti, will be encouraged.

Everyone in the region knows Ypsilanti has great things to do in great places that are in great shape!

Ypsilanti has a wealth of beautiful places, historic buildings, and fun activities. These assets will be built upon and shouted from the rooftops. Ypsilanti's image should match its vibrancy. Vibrancy comes from preserving, using, and enriching all places. While permanent uses may not be found for vacant buildings immediately, temporary or pop-up activities should be options.

Ypsilanti is an asset of Eastern Michigan University, and Eastern Michigan University is an asset of Ypsilanti

The futures of Ypsilanti and Eastern Michigan University are entwined. The City will plan and develop policies for Ypsilanti to be a home for the university itself, as well as its students, faculty and staff. The physical planning of the community

and university should be coordinated, as well as efforts to welcome and integrate Ypsilanti as treasured part of the EMU experience.

We can only achieve our vision by building a community amongst ourselves and with our neighbors

Relationships are the key to success. While each group and neighborhood needs space for themselves, the City thrives when we work together. The community includes not only those who live in the City, but those who work and study here and own businesses as well as Ypsilanti Community Schools, neighboring municipalities, the City of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County.

The table on the following pages is a decision making rubric for elected and appointed officials, with questions and measures for each guiding value. The chapter following the decision rubric explores the current state of the City in terms of safety, diversity and sustainability, the core values to which all of the others relate.

DECISION MAKING RUBRIC

When making decisions, City of Ypsilanti officials, staff and citizens will ask if the option chosen furthers at least one, if not several of the values below, while not damaging the others. Starting with the adoption of this plan until the next master plan is written, it is incumbent upon the responsible party to track the “measures” listed as they provide some insight into whether the outcomes of City efforts are effective responses the decision-making questions.

Guiding Value	Questions	Measures	Responsible Party
Safety comes first	Does this action protect or enhance safety?	Trend in crime rates	Police Department (PD)
	Is natural surveillance, where people can see what is going on in public places from private ones, created?	% of functioning street lights	Department of Public Safety (DPS)
	Are public spaces, private spaces, and semi-public spaces easily known, so the average person knows where the street ends and someone's property begins?	Design standards that differentiate between public and private space	Community & Economic Development (CED)
	Are public spaces (parks, streets, parking lots) well lit?	Enforcement of parking lot lighting requirements	CED
	Are the places for emergency vehicles clear, accessible, and placed to best help first responders do their job?	# of pedestrians/bicyclist crashes	DPS
Diversity is our strength	Does this action welcome and/or sustain Ypsilanti's diverse population?	Changes in ethnic mix, city-wide and by neighborhood	CED
	Does this action welcome new groups to Ypsilanti?	Changes in diversity of ages by neighborhood	CED
	Does this action reward or privilege one group over another?	# of public facilities and/or buildings with universal design (accessibility measure)	DPS
	Are policies flexible enough to allow and encourage diversity?	Trends in business types (number and % of tax base)	Building Department
	Does this action create/maintain/improve the diversity of the business mix?	Change in income city-wide and by neighborhood	CED

Guiding Value	Questions	Measures	Responsible Party
Ypsilanti is sustainable	Does this action replenish resources?	Trend in greenhouse gas emissions	DPS
	Does this action make Ypsilanti a more environmentally sustainable place?	# of kilowatts produced by renewable energy installations	DPS
	Does this action improve the financial viability of the city in 20 years?	Trend in budget deficits	Finance
	Does this action create job opportunities for all residents?	Number of jobs created in Ypsilanti that pay a livable wage	CED
	Do the jobs created provide a livable wage? Does this action encourage, provide, or promote equity?	Number living wage jobs produced through city contracts	Finance
Communication is key	Does this action help communicate with everyone in the community?	Number of people who have signed up for the city's newsletter	CED
	Were all members of the community told about deliberation of this action in an accessible way?	Budget devoted to communication including printing, mailing, social media participation, and website update.	Finance
	How will the results of this action be shared with the community in an accessible way?	# of website hits	CED
	Is communication infrastructure maintained and enhanced?	Change in voter participation by ward	Clerk
	Is the City maintaining relationships to communicate to groups throughout the City?	# of social media followers	CED

Guiding Value	Questions	Measures	Responsible Party
Anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti	Does this action preserve, improve and/or create viable, safe, affordable homes?	Change in the % of cost-burdened households	Housing Commission
	Does this action preserve/create variety in housing products in terms of size (square footage and/or # of bedrooms) and ownership/rental type?	Trends in the # residential building permits by building type (single-family, 2-5 unit, 5+ unit) by neighborhood	CED
	Will this action result in the continued maintenance and care of existing residences?	Supply and demand for senior housing	Housing Commission
	Do residents, especially young adults and seniors, have the ability and/or resources to maintain their homes?	Trends in home ownership among young professionals and pre-family households	Housing Commission
	Will this action preserve or create housing that is needed?	Number of residential blight violations	CED
		Median housing values by neighborhood	Housing Commission
Easily walk, bike, drive or take transit from anywhere	Does this action preserve or create a complete transportation system with room on the roads for cars, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians?	# of miles of additional bicycle paths and sidewalk	DPS
	Does this action reward those taking a short trip with the City, rather than those passing through?	Increase in bus ridership from Ypsilanti residents	CED
	Does this action help Ypsilanti be part of the regional transportation network?	Amount of money spent on maintenance of streets, sidewalks, and multi-use paths	Finance
		Change in "drive alone" commuting	CED
		Traffic counts for all transportation modes of key intersections	DPS

Guiding Value	Questions	Measures	Responsible Party
Great place to do business, especially green and creative	Does this action create a business environment that fosters creativity?	# of new green/creative businesses started	CED
	Does this action attract new and/or retain existing businesses?	# and types of grants issued	DDA/CED
	Does this action foster locally grown enterprises?	Demographic data of grant recipients	CED
	Does this action reward green and sustainable businesses?	# of local business expansions	DDA/CED
		Length of time to complete the site plan and permitting process	CED
Everyone in the region knows Ypsilanti has great things to do in great places that are in great shape!	Does this action preserve, use, and/or enrich all places?	Volunteer hours/personnel hours dedicated to event planning and operation	CED & CVB
	Does this action enhance Ypsilanti's reputation as a great place?	Condition of streetscape amenities (benches, landscaping, bicycle racks)	DPS
	Does this action bring people to visit great places in Ypsilanti?	Attendance at City-sponsored events	CED & CVB
		Ratio of positive/negative feedback of events from visitors	CED & CVB
		Distance visitors traveled to attend the event	CED & CVB

Guiding Value	Questions	Measures	Responsible Party
Ypsilanti is an asset of Eastern Michigan University, and Eastern Michigan University is an asset of Ypsilanti	Does this action help Ypsilanti be a home for the university itself, as well as its students, faculty, and staff?	# of joint programs between the City and EMU	CED
	Does this action integrate Ypsilanti as part of the EMU experience?	# of projects that EMU students/faculty assist with that serve the City	CED
	Does this action support EMU's integration into the City?	# students and faculty that live in Ypsilanti	CED
Build a community amongst ourselves and with our neighbors	Does this action build community within the City?	# of users of the app nextdoor.com	CED
	Does this action foster relationships with school districts, neighboring municipalities, the City of Ann Arbor, and Washtenaw County?	# of joint meetings between government bodies, community groups, Ypsilanti schools, etc.	CED
	Does this action and/or communication celebrate successes within the City as a community?	The formation of neighborhood associations	CED
		# of youth participants	CED
		Hours of City staff spent with community organizations	CED

Chapter 3 – Ypsilanti Now

“There are three sides to every story in Ypsilanti.” -unsolicited advice e-mailed to the Consultant Team from a former City resident

The following chapter lays out the latest facts about the City of Ypsilanti - the people, the buildings, the economy, and the transportation network (roads, buses, bicycle lanes and sidewalks). Each section ends with policy implications that have influenced the Master Plan and should be factored into future decisions.

Population

Like many of Michigan’s older industrial towns, Ypsilanti saw rapid mid-century population growth, followed by more recent declines (Figure 1). The city has a sizable African-American population, though as captured in the “Percent Minority” map, the city remains racially segregated by neighborhood. The city’s industrial heritage has also left the city’s population vulnerable to the past decades of deindustrialization, with pockets of high poverty and unemployment.

The historic core of Ypsilanti was a mature industrial town of nearly 7,500 people by the beginning of the 20th century, with population changing only modestly over the next 30 years. However, both the industrial mobilization of World War II and the auto industry’s post-war boom were reflected in population growth, with the Census reporting a peak of 29,538 residents in 1970.

Since that time, the city’s population has shrunk to 19,435 in 2010 and an estimated 20,804 in 2017 per American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates— only slightly higher than the city’s 1950 population. Population forecasts by ESRI, a proprietary software program, projects that the population will increase to about 21,443 by 2024.

Ypsilanti, like the nation as a whole, has seen household sizes decline over time. Societal trends, including delaying marriage and childbearing, have led to more householders living alone or as married couples without children. In Ypsilanti, the household size declined from 2.38 in 1990 to 2.29 in 2000 to 2.06 in 2010. Yet, as of 2017 ACS 5-year estimates, the trend has reversed: household size has increased again to 2.26. Additionally, rental households had fewer average residents than owner-occupied households: 2.19 compared to 2.41, perhaps contrary to popular belief. The same is true at the county and state level.

Shape Ypsilanti Master Plan (DRAFT UPDATE) – July 15, 2020

Age, Educational Attainment & University Influence

When analyzed at a City level, the City of Ypsilanti has a younger population (see Figure 3) than its neighbors, the region, and the state of Michigan overall. However, when broken down by census tract, younger populations are clustered around the Eastern Michigan campus (Map 2). The enrollment numbers of Eastern Michigan University have increased (see Figure 2) since 1960, with a few dips and a slight decline in enrollment over the past two decades – as of the 2019 fall semester, Eastern Michigan has a total enrollment of 17,784 students.¹

The same pattern emerges for educational attainment. Ypsilanti’s population overall has a relatively high level of educational attainment, especially compared to the region and state. However, Maps 3-6 show a large geographic disparity, with residents holding a college degree ranging from 59.0% in the northern part of the city to 15.5% in the southwest portion. With the current emphasis on education as the key to individual and community prosperity, this education gap has troubling implications for the city’s ability to fully participate in the knowledge economy.

The University presence appears to counter the declining industrial sector, when the city is viewed as a whole. However, these two trends have impacted different parts of the population: the educational influence in some ways masks, rather than mitigates, the impacts of deindustrialization.

Equity, Race, Ethnicity & Income

Ypsilanti is a diverse community in terms of race, ethnicity, and disability. The city prides itself on its reputation as welcoming to all, as evidenced in its guiding values.

The city has a sizable African-American population, comprising about 30.3% of the city’s population as of 2017– a slight decline since 2010 (31.9%). Approximately 4.5% of residents identified as Hispanic and 3.5% Asian in 2017— while these numbers are relatively small, they have grown or stayed the same since 2000 Census and the 3.9% Hispanic and 4.3% Asian in the 2010 Census.

That is to say, that as the city grows and shrinks, it is staying racially and ethnically diverse.

African-American residents predominantly live in the southwestern portion of the city—2017 ACS 5-year estimates show around 68% of residents in this area to be African-American. This is down from 80% in 2010 and from 90% in 2000, showing a steady change in racial composition over the past two decades.

Regardless of this change, when combined with data also showing lower educational attainment levels and household income, a distinct racial, economic, and educational segregation exists even in a small city like Ypsilanti. The city needs to focus on ensuring the residents of challenged areas receive a sufficient share of public resources to maintain equity.

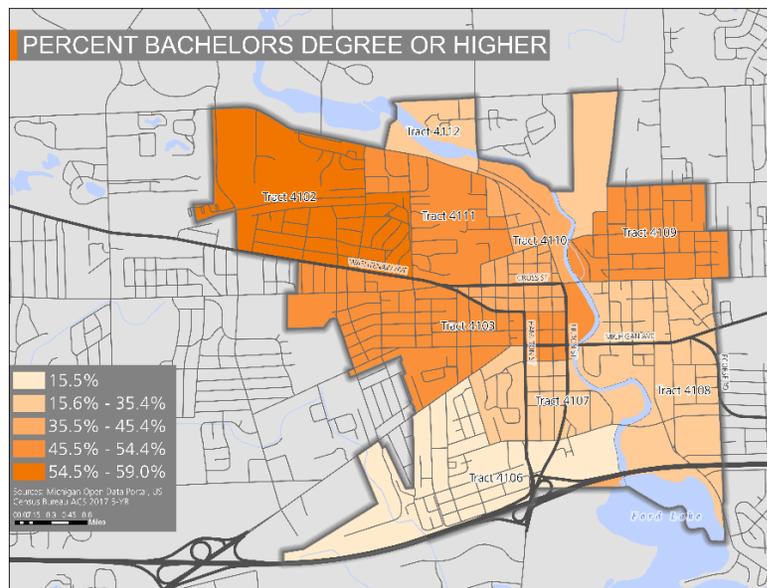
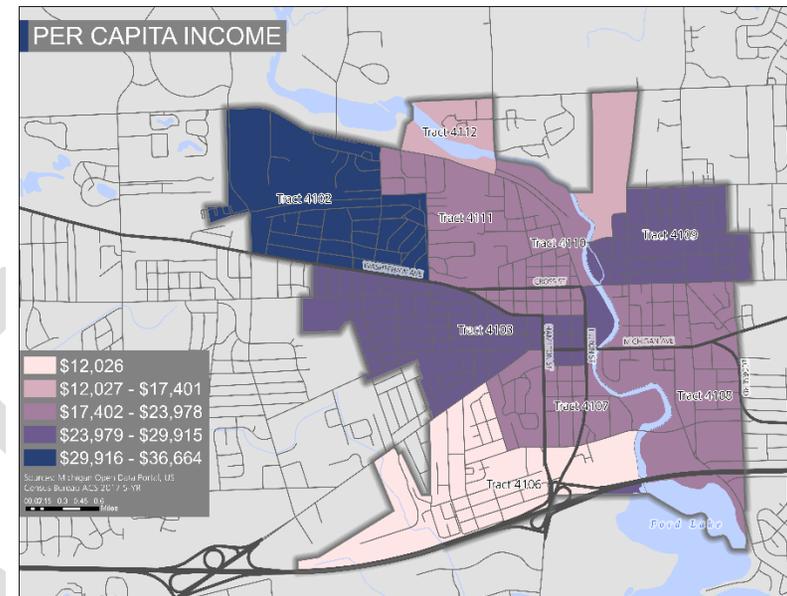
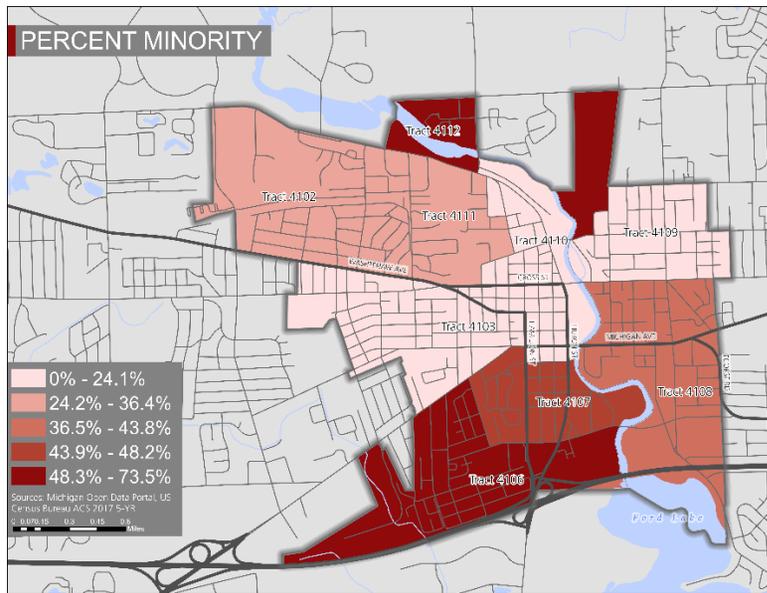
As a whole, the estimated 2017 per capita income for the City is \$24,381 which is less than the state as a whole at \$28,938. In comparison, Washtenaw County's per capita income is \$37,455, showing that Ypsilanti's residents earn about 65% of the County's per capita income. Three census tracts (tract 4102, 4103, 4109) in the City are above the state per capita levels (consistent with 2010 census data), with one of the City's tracts earning less than half of the state per capita income: census tract 4106. With this in mind, 2020 is a census year, and it's most important tracking these trends from census to census rather than census-to-ACS.

The maps 3-6 tell multiple stories:

- Compared to the state of Michigan overall, Ypsilanti is a racially diverse city, with a range of education levels and incomes. It should be poised to take advantage of the knowledge economy of the 21st century given its proximity to knowledge-based sectors.
- The City of Ypsilanti is as racially diverse as Ypsilanti Township. However, its per capita income is lower than the adjoining municipalities with Ypsilanti Township having the lowest educational attainment. In attracting knowledge economy firms, the City competes regionally with its neighbors. Ann Arbor, to the west, is home to the University of Michigan and has more residents with college degrees and higher incomes.
- Within the city itself, race, income, educational attainment, and location are interconnected. The differences in educational attainment and income mean that one size cannot fit all in terms of policy for the entire City. When implementing policies to achieve safety, diversity and

sustainability for the City, the needs and strengths of residents in each neighborhood must be taken into account because they are different.

Maps 3-5: Sensitive Population Analysis: Minority, Education, & Income



ACS 2017 5-Year Estimates, verified for statistical significance at the 90% confidence interval.

Maps produced by Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

HOUSING

Ypsilanti has strong, stable neighborhoods, historic architecture, and a ratio of rental-to-owner occupancy higher than the national average, but typical of a college town. As of 2017, 69.2% of occupied dwelling units were renter-occupied and 30.8% owner-occupied. This split is nearly opposite the national owner-occupancy rate of 63.8% and the Washtenaw County owner-occupancy rate of 60.2%. However, it is similar to other college towns in the region, as shown in Figure 4.

Only about 36% of dwelling units in the city are detached single-family structures. About 41% of housing units are in structures that contain more than 5 dwelling units, and 16% of dwelling units are in structures that contain 20 or more units. By comparison, Washtenaw County as a whole has 57% of total dwelling units found in detached single-family family structures, 26% in structures with at least 5 units, and only 8% in structures with at least 20 units.

Occupancy and housing type are strongly related, as shown in Maps 6 and 7. While the city does have some single-family rental housing and some owner-occupied units in multi-unit structures, 92% of detached single-family homes in the city are owner-occupied, according to 2020 assessment data.

The clustering of rental units in large on-campus and near-campus student apartments complexes, and a few other large multi-family properties compared to the owner-occupied dominance of single-family homes means that focusing only on the percentage of units that are rental-occupied may exaggerate the impact of rental housing on Ypsilanti neighborhoods: when measured on a parcel basis, rather than by dwelling units, 66.7% of Ypsilanti's residential properties were owner-occupied residences in 2010, and an additional 2.6% partially owner-occupied (e.g. multi-unit houses with the owner living on-site). On a land area basis, single-family homes make up 64.4% of the city's residential property area.

The amount of rental housing in the city is also strongly related to the city's relatively young population, including student households: 25% of households in the city are headed by a householder aged 15-24; of these households, 99% rent their homes. Another 25% of households are headed by a 25- to 34-year-old

householder; of these households, 85% rent their homes, which is a dramatic increase from 2010 where only 65% of householders in this age range rented their homes. The housing market analysis on the following pages (see Figure 8) analyzes these trends and others by census tract.

Ypsilanti has a historic core of neighborhoods built before 1900. Developed before the advent of the automobile, they were designed for pedestrians with parks, business districts, and the community within comfortable walking distance from housing. Over the years, many of the homes were subdivided for worker housing during World War II or later as student housing. The early 2000s saw the greatest change in the city's housing stock since the 1970s, with building permit data showing a nearly 5% increase in housing units in the first half of the decade. Most of this was multi-family construction, though of diverse types.

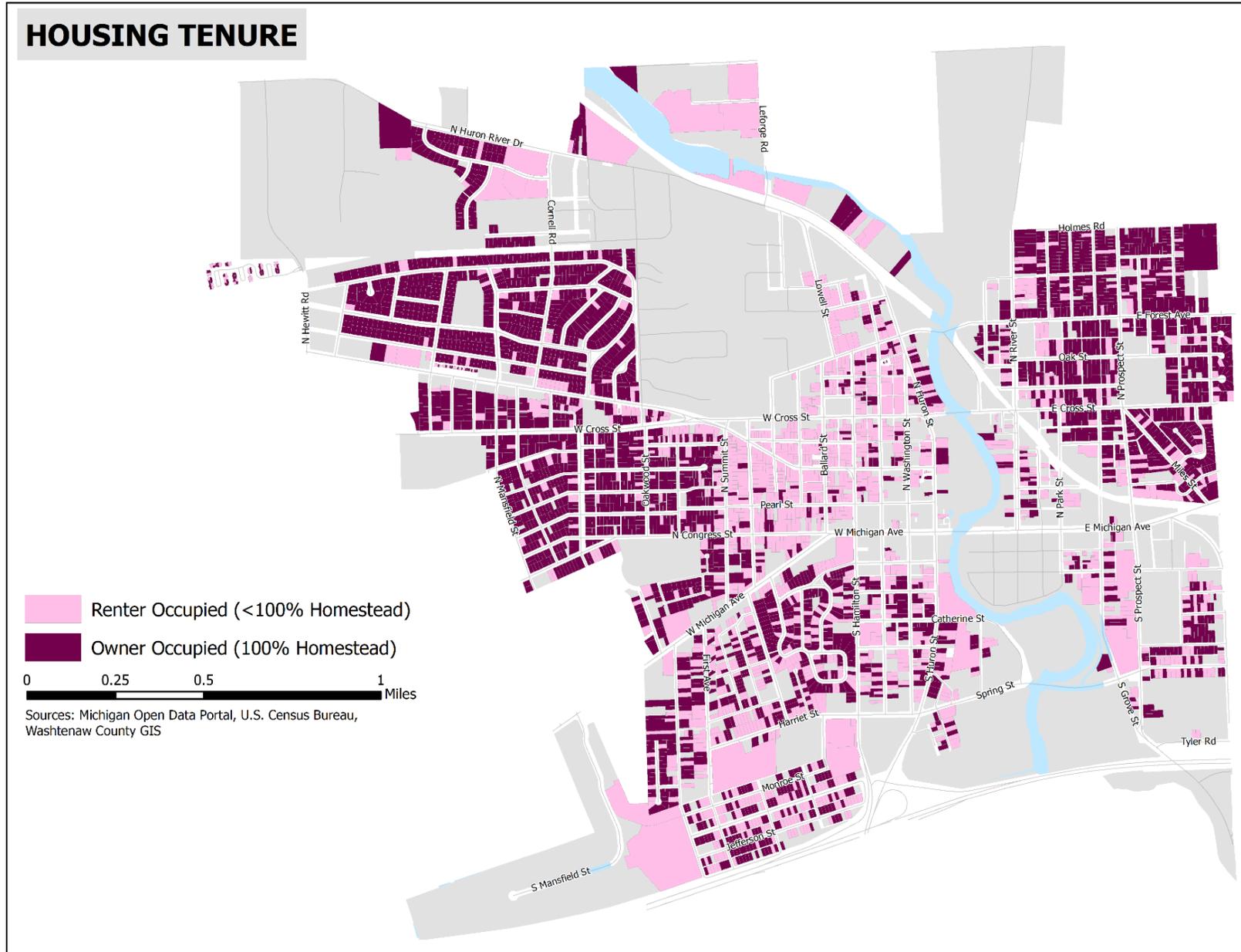
Despite Ypsilanti's base of strong historic neighborhoods, the 2015 Housing Affordability and Economic Equity Analysis for Washtenaw County indicates that the City of Ypsilanti's housing market is "fundamentally weak." According to the report, there is increasing inequity within the County between the Ann Arbor area and the Ypsilanti area (City and Township). Property values are increasing in the Ann Arbor housing market to unaffordable levels, displacing Ann Arbor residents to Ypsilanti, creating an increasingly imbalanced market. More affordable housing values are resulting in higher concentrations of struggling families in the Ypsilanti area. Many of the subsidized housing units in the County are concentrated in Ypsilanti, a trend that this report recommends reversing – dispersing subsidized housing throughout the County will help lessen the increasing concentration of cost-burdened households in Ypsilanti.² The size of dwelling units and lot sizes is one tool that cities have to try to create a range of market rate housing options for people of all incomes and life stages. The City has been proactive in updating its zoning ordinance to permit a greater variety of housing.

Figure 4: Housing Tenure for University Towns

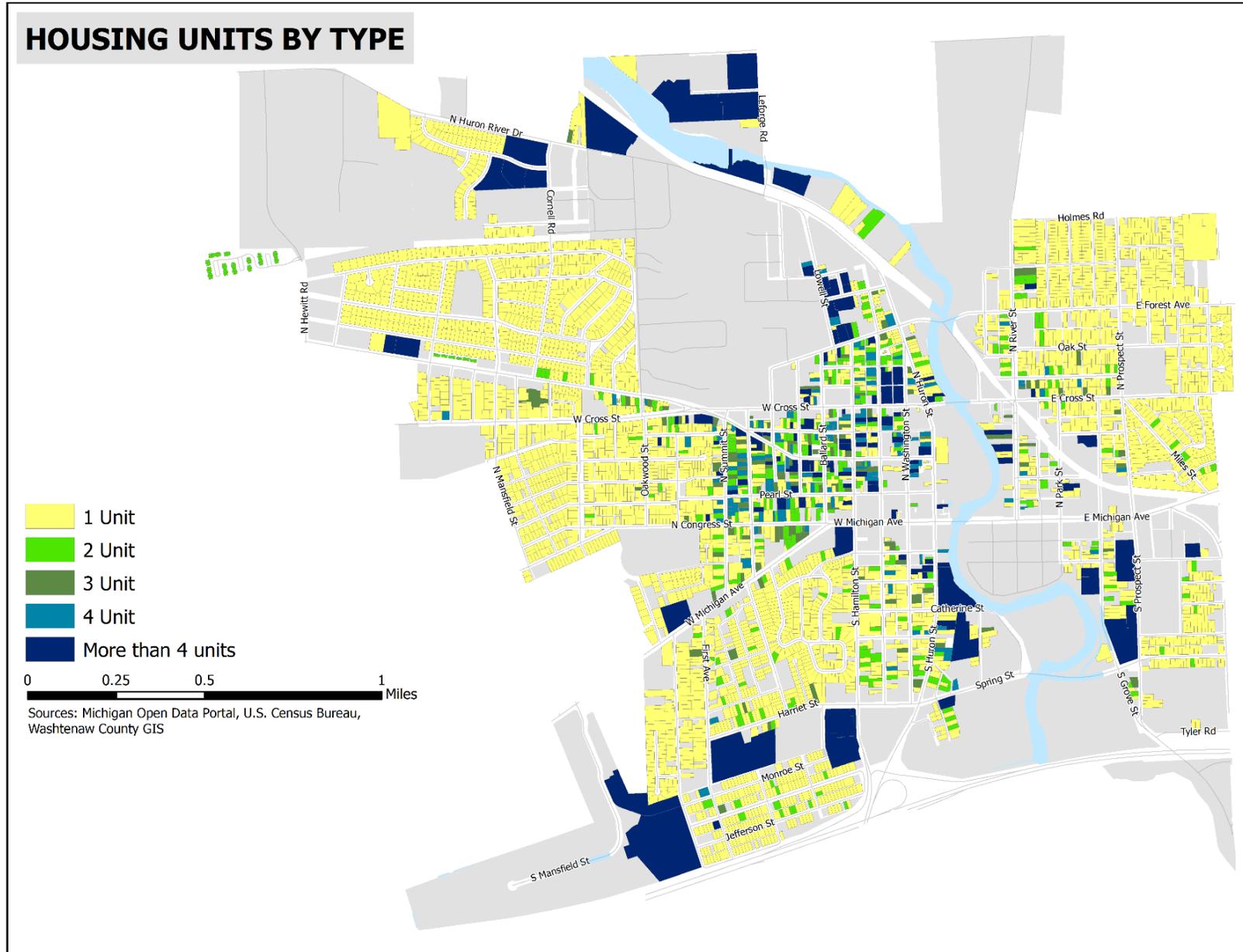
City	Occupied housing units (2017)	Percentage Rental (2017)
Athens, Ohio	6,887	71.4
Oxford, Ohio	6,006	69.4
Ypsilanti	7,865	69.2
East Lansing	13,585	66.2
Bowling Green, Ohio	11,291	62.2
Mt. Pleasant	8,027	60.9
Kalamazoo	28,996	55.2
Ann Arbor	47,524	54.1
Marquette	7,587	50.8
Muncie, Indiana	27,666	48.6
Sault Ste. Marie	5,581	45.2

Source: ACS 2013-2017 5-Year estimates

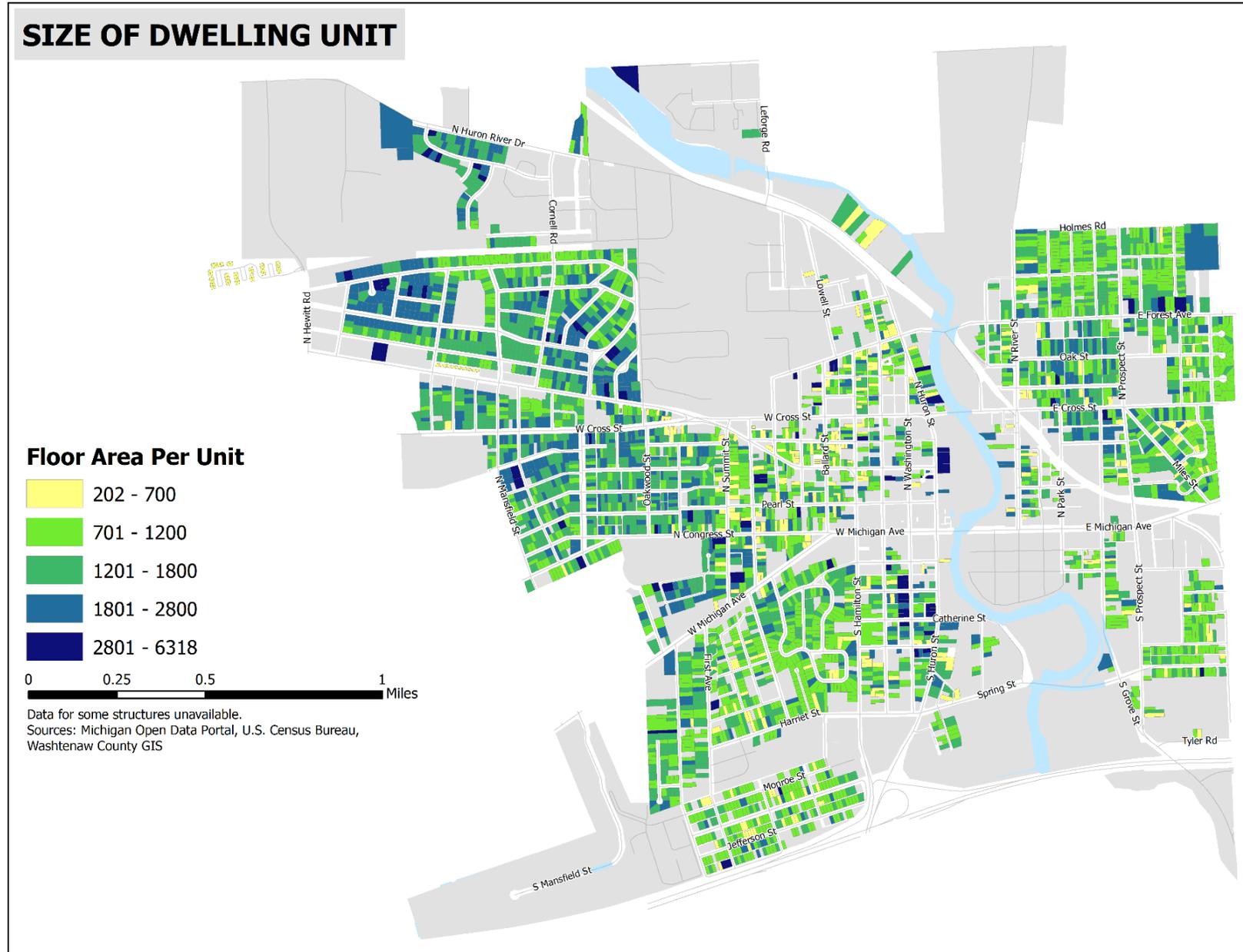
Map 6: Rental & Occupied Housing



Map 7: Housing Units by Type



Map 9: Size of Dwelling Unit



Housing Data Summary

The following factors are key to the Master Plan:

- The majority of housing units are leased, rather than owner-occupied, which tracks with the housing mix in other college towns.
- Census data shows concentrations of renters in the same tracts with a higher percentage of younger adults, under the age of 24, indicating the influence of EMU students on the housing market.
- Most single-family homes are owner-occupied.
- Neighborhoods near EMU and the historic downtown were built, earlier, have a mix of rental and owner-occupied units as well as larger houses
- Housing built post-World War II is smaller, either mostly rentals or mostly owner-occupied and has fewer conversions to multiple-family and other uses.
- Census tracts 4102, 4107, and 4109 have aging populations, which means they will need services to stay in their homes or they will move to a different residence within the next 10-20 years.
- EMU will continue to bring residents - students to the Midtown and Riverside neighborhoods, and faculty/staff to the College Heights and Normal Park neighborhoods. However, both groups reside in all areas of the City.
- Rail service at Depot Town will increase housing values and demand for housing within a 10-minute walk, approximately a half-mile radius, of the stop.
- Heritage Park and Worden Gardens are where first-time home buyers and income property purchasers are most likely to purchase houses.
- Well-maintained, historic neighborhoods have continued to hold their value and will likely in the future.
- Housing inequity within Washtenaw County is increasing with a growing divide between the strengthening Ann Arbor market and Ypsilanti's weaker market.

Figure 7: Housing Market Analysis

To be added/formatted later.

DRAFT

ECONOMY

The decline of manufacturing’s prominence has changed the list of major employers in the area. The current list of the top 20 major employers (defined as having at least 500 employees in the Washtenaw County) along with the list in the City’s 1998 and 2013 Master Plans shows an absence of manufacturing firms. Instead, educational and medical employers dominate the list, of the top 10, eight of the major employers are related to education, health care, or government, most of which are located in Ann Arbor (see Figure 8). Faurecia North America has grown immensely over the last few years, a testament to a growing economy in comparison to 2013. Still, the trajectory for manufacturing, while still an important component of Michigan’s economy, is predicted to shrink.³ Ypsilanti is growing farther apart from its industrial past.

While many jobs are still located in or relatively close to Ypsilanti, these jobs may require a higher level of education on average than the previous manufacturing jobs. This trend is a concern because, as noted previously, parts of the City have extremely low educational attainment rates. These parts of the community are at-risk for being left behind by the changing character of the job market and the shift from manufacturing to a knowledge economy.

Figure 8: Change Number of Employees in Washtenaw County

Company	Location (Primary)	2019	2013	2010	1998	Trend
University of Michigan	Ann Arbor	33,225	16,143	26,241	11,118	↑
University Health Systems	Ann Arbor		12,000	19,614	6,742	
Trinity Health	Livonia	7,435				----
Federal government	Detroit	3,147				----
Ann Arbor Public Schools	Ann Arbor	2,225	3,578	2,659		↓
Integrated Health Associates	Ann Arbor	1,664				----
Eastern Michigan University	Ypsilanti	1,559	1,976	1,950	1,991	↓
Faurecia North America	Saline	1,442	800			↑
Thomson Reuters	Ann Arbor	1,300	1,100	1,800		↓
Washtenaw County	Ann Arbor	1,264	1,339	1,345	1,200	↑
Terumo Cardiovascular Group	Ann Arbor	1,100				----
Toyota Technical Center	York Township	1,095	1,500	1,036		↑
St Joseph Mercy Chelsea	Chelsea	1,082				----
Domino's Pizza	Ann Arbor Twp	865				----
IBM Watson Health	Ann Arbor	850				----
City of Ann Arbor	Ann Arbor	712	710	766	951	↓
Ford Motor Company	Ypsilanti	700	823	800	1200	↓
Zingerman's Family of Business	Ann Arbor	700				----

Table Data Source: 2013 & 2019 figures - Ann Arbor Spark; 2010 - Draft AAATA Transit Audit Needs Assessment; 1998 - Washtenaw Economic Development Council-Crain's Detroit Business

Figure 9: Major Taxpayers, 1999-2020

Major Taxpayers	2020			2013			2009			1999		
	Taxable Value (in 1,000s)	City Rank	% of total	Taxable Value (in 1,000s)	City Rank	% of total	Taxable Value (in 1,000s)	City Rank	% of total	Taxable Value in 1,000s)	City Rank	% of total
Arbor One 18, LLC	\$5,650	1	2.33%									
LeForge Station II, LLC	\$5,353	2	2.21%	\$8,249	1	2.84%	\$9,148	3	2.27%			
Barnes & Barnes Properties, LLC	\$5,212	3	2.15%	\$2,918	4	1.01%	\$3,046	7	0.76%			
DTE Electric Company (formerly Detroit Edison)	\$5,019	4	2.07%	\$3,360	2	1.16%	9,537	2	2.37%	\$4,265	2	1.54%
River Drive Properties, LLC	\$3,191	5	1.32%	\$2,921	3	1.01%	3,400	5	0.84%	\$3,267	5	1.18%
DTE Gas Company (formerly Mich Con Utility)	\$2,687	6	1.11%	\$2,900	5	1.00%	-			\$3,641	4	1.31%
Forrest Knoll Apts.	\$2,023	7	0.84%	\$1,849	6	0.64%						
Ypsilanti Realty Holdings, LLC	\$1,711	8	0.71%									
Erie Investments No. 15, LLC	\$1,639	9	0.68%									
Cross Street Village	\$1,638	10	0.68%									
Asad Khailany	-			\$1,811	7	0.62%	\$1,811	9	0.45%	\$1,413	10	0.51%
Forest Health Medical (formerly Beyer Hospital)	-					0.82%	\$3,304	6	0.82%	\$1,904	0	0.69%
Beal Properties	\$1,221			\$2,369	8	0.55%						
Huron View Apartments	\$1,594			\$1,587	9	0.50%	\$1,706	10	0.42%			
Angstrom USA, LLC (formerly Visteon)	-			\$1,460	10		28,266	1	7.02%	\$42,470	1	15.33%
River Rain Apartments	\$1,518					0.46%	\$2,232	8	0.55%	\$1,939	8	0.70%
Reichuang, LLC (formerly Exemplar Manufacturing)	\$1,118			\$862						\$4,151	3	1.50%
Crown Paper Company Manufacturing	-			\$1,334						\$2,935	6	1.06%
Eastern Village Apartments	-			-		0.00%				\$1,261	7	0.46%
Total of top ten taxpayers	\$34,123		14.09%	\$29,424		6.47%	\$66,262		16.45%	\$67,246		24.28%

Commercial Assessment

In the 2013 master plan, a commercial assessment estimated that \$59,687,099 of potential sales leaves the City, accounting for 55% of the total sales potential for the Ypsilanti market area. While the same analysis was not conducted, similar estimates from ESRI for the “retail gap” in 2017 show the trend in lost sales has shrunk to \$34,553,228, which shows that more money is being captured locally and potential drawing more visitors in. Most of the surplus in spending is coming from sales in “food and drink.” This is a positive trend and an indication to continue tailoring economic development efforts to reduce the retail gap in areas where there is major “leakage”: food and beverage, general merchandise, clothing and accessories, furniture and home furnishing, and electronics and appliances.

The following commercial markets were identified for potential growth:

- **The Ypsilanti Competitive Market:** In 2013 focus groups, residents expressed a fierce devotion to local businesses. Also, many wanted to be able to walk or bike to get daily items. Frustration was continually expressed about the lack of a full-line grocery store and specialty food markets in the City limits.
- **Underestimated College Student Market:** EMU students are a recession-proof market. However, their spending patterns are different than non-student households with similar incomes. They tend to spend a greater percentage of their money on electronics, food away from home and consumer items, than family households in the same earning classification.
- **Neighboring Medical Center Market:** The St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Hospital is located in Superior Township, near the City’s border. The staff, estimated to exceed 5,000 people, and the visitors to the complex are an untapped market for the City’s retail businesses, including restaurants and entertainment.

Emerging Sectors

While no one sector has replaced the manufacturing jobs lost in the City, several sectors have emerged: small manufacturing and craft production, creative economy, renewable energy, and food. Each of these sectors are rooted in companies that have started in Ypsilanti.

Small and craft manufacturing has been a part of the City’s economy since the beginning of the automobile industry. Small craft shops clustered around the larger manufacturing facilities supplying parts and prototypes. Marsh Plating was

founded over forty years ago, located near the downtown, is an example of an automobile supplier in the City. Michigan Ladder is another example of a small manufacturing facility in the City. The 119-year old company has recently expanded its manufacturing space, where wood and fiberglass ladders are assembled and hopes to add 6 new jobs to its workforce between 2013 and 2015. The challenge for the City is to make these industries operation and expansion possible while meeting the values of the community.

The creative economy - defined as advertising, architecture, art, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, research and development, software, toys and games, television and radio, and video games - has gained a foothold in Ypsilanti. Various businesses have started in or relocated to Ypsilanti, such as VGKids. VGKids is a screen printing company that has consolidated operations in the City, after closing a manufacturing facility in California. The company also provides studio space to small creative businesses. More recently, Grove Studios and Ypsi Alloy Studio have opened, the former a 24/7 music rehearsal space and the latter is a shared space to create and collaborate on visual arts. While these types of businesses can generally use many types of buildings, the building stock is not always suitable. The current zoning ordinance is friendly to creative enterprise as they are permitted in several commercial and industrial zones, but mid-size facilities for growing companies to move into - either office or small manufacturing - are difficult to find.

While no privately held renewable energy company is operating in Ypsilanti, the efforts of individuals and groups have given the City of Ypsilanti a reputation as a leader in sustainable energy. An example of the momentum within the City is SolarYpsi, a volunteer effort to bring solar energy generation to the City of Ypsilanti. The group has helped win grants to fund and/or help install four solar facilities in the City and maintains a website that reports in real time the amount of energy being generated by solar installations in and around the City.

In 2016, DTE Energy completed the installation of a solar array on Ypsilanti’s Highland Cemetery. The approximately 2,520 solar panels are enough to power 150 homes!⁴ City government can use this effort and others as a marketing tool to attract renewable energy manufacturers or installation companies to the City. The City has revised its ordinances and been awarded a SolSmart Gold award for having an online permitting checklist, permitting solar by-right as an accessory use in all zones, cross-training inspection and permitting staff, and a streamlined

permitting process for small photovoltaic systems (more detail in the Sustainability Section).⁵ The city is proud to be the first in Michigan to receive this award from a national program.

A number food-based businesses have opened in Ypsilanti in the past five years. Multiple new restaurants have opened in the Historic Downtown. The farmers market was recently established in Historic Downtown. Many vendors are Ypsilanti residents who produce value-added products, like baked goods and jams, out of their home kitchens under the Michigan Cottage Food Law. Also, more residents are growing and/or raising their own food. Growing Hope, an Ypsilanti-based non-profit, is a leader in the local food movement in the region and provides technical support to beginning and experienced gardeners as well as children. Restaurant Depot, in Ypsilanti Township, supplies wholesale food, beverages, and equipment to restaurants and plays a role in the growth of this sector. Like the creative economy businesses, food-based businesses have challenges when they expand in scale. Home entrepreneurs reach a point where a commercial kitchen is needed. Restaurants need a larger space. The City has permitted hoop houses and greenhouses to create more space in park and residential districts to encourage urban agriculture. The City can continue to foster growth of food-based businesses by permitting incubator kitchens as an intermediate step for entrepreneurs in this field.

In 2018, recreational marijuana was passed by Michigan voters and sales are now legal. Ypsilanti adopted its own business ordinance and zoning ordinance, which means that provisioning centers that sell marijuana for recreational uses are permitted. Within the last five years, over a half a dozen grow facilities and dispensaries emerged under the medicinal legislation. Because sales for recreational use just went into effect, it is too soon to say what affect this may have. Like other businesses, they are subject to the market, however, because hundreds of communities have banned such sales, it may produce certain hot spots in the state.

The City should align its policies and regulations to give each of these emerging sectors physical space and economic incentives to start or locate and then grow in the City. Zoning should allow these uses in various sizes and formats, while being cognizant of impacts on neighbors. Economic incentives, such as tax abatements, should be used to continue the growth of these sectors.

City Budget

Over the last decade, the city's industrial tax base has declined, both in total dollar value and in share of the total, with residential property making up a greater portion of the tax base. The foreclosure crisis in turn contributed to a substantial loss of residential taxable value, beginning in 1998. As of July 2019, the City's total taxable value is \$242,124,962.

The character of the city's tax base has shifted towards residential rental property, with most of the city's top 10 taxpayers in 2019 being property management companies, which has been a significant change over the past two decades (see Figure 9). The top ten taxpayers represent about 14% of the City's tax base, which has risen from less than 9% in 2013, though is still lower than in 1999 when the top ten taxpayers represented almost a quarter of the City's tax base. Since 2013, however, the total taxable value of the top ten taxpayers in the City has increased.

In addition, payment on bonds for the acquisition and remediation of the Water Street property began in the late 1990s and account for 10% of the City's general fund budget. According to the City Manager's 2012-2017 Recovery Plan, the City could pay for few capital expenditure in that time period unless additional, new sources of funds could be found. In 2017, voters passed a 2.3-mill through 2031 to pay down the City's \$7.4 million debt on the Water Street property.⁶ Meanwhile, the City would like to sell the property and see development occur that meets the master plan goals. A biking and walking trail along the Huron River frontage, known as the River's Edge Trail, connects Riverside Park to the north with Waterworks Park to the south. It is a part of a 37-mile-long Border-to-Border Trail running through Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and adjacent communities. The River's Edge Trail is a protected trail that will not be sold as part of Water Street.

Economics Summary

The following factors are key to the Master Plan:

- The economy of the City of Ypsilanti has fundamentally shifted in the past decade, shifting the economy from industrial to property management and knowledge-based sectors.
- Portions of the City, both property and population, have been left behind due to economic change. Instead of working in factories, residents with lower educational attainment work in retail or service sector jobs, often

outside the City, often for low wages. Many need bus or transit to get to work.

- The commercial market is underserved, showing a need not only for more businesses but also for marketing of the community as a place to shop to the larger region and targeted nearby populations, EMU students and staff and visitors to St. Joseph Ann Arbor Hospital.
- Several sectors are building momentum in the City of Ypsilanti - small manufacturing, creative economy, renewable energy, and local food. Each one has the potential to create dozens of jobs, not the hundreds in manufacturing previously. However, these are local entities with a commitment to the City. The challenge is to foster growth of these sectors despite the physical constraints of the City’s land; very few properties are suitable for large scale operations.
- The City budget has suffered due to several reasons. Originally, the economic shift and ongoing debt played a role. But more recent challenges include the inability for city property tax revenues to reflect the increases in property value, post-recession, due to the Headlee Amendment and Proposal A.

TRANSPORTATION

The street and park structure of the City today was laid out in the early 20th century. However, the function of streets changed in the mid 20th century with the creation of one-way streets when an interchange for Ypsilanti was constructed at Interstate 94 and Huron. At the time, a large workforce commuted to the factories in the southern end of the City quickly in and out. Today, those factories either no longer exist or employ a small percentage of the workers than in the past.

In addition, the transportation options available within Ypsilanti are changing. Washtenaw County is planning for rapid bus service along Washtenaw Avenue, increasing the capacity and decreasing the travel time along the most heavily travelled bus line for The Ride.

The Border-to-Border (B2B) trail that spans Washtenaw County has completed 35 miles of the Huron River Greenway connecting Dexter, Ann Arbor, and Ypsilanti along the Huron River through paved, ADA compliant, shared-use pathways. In 2015, the B2B trail was incorporated in Michigan’s Iron Belle Trail, a network 2,000 miles long that spans the state.

Figure 10: Non-motorized Deficiencies, 2013

Sidewalk	Bike facility		
	Off-roadway	Roadway	
Existing miles	98.49	5.55	3.71
Deficient miles	23.37	n/a	39.33
Deficient %	19.2%		

Data Source: Washtenaw Area Transportation Study

Non-Motorized Network

Ypsilanti’s historically compact core and existing sidewalk network make the city generally friendly to non-motorized traffic like bicycles, pedestrians, and wheelchair users. Over the past decade, this has been improved upon by several efforts:

- The City has participated in the County’s Greenway Advisory Committee and regional “Border to Border Trail” (B2B) effort.
- Bike lanes have been added to several streets during resurfacing projects.
- Sidewalk curb ramps are being upgraded to ADA standards throughout the city.
- Bike racks have been installed in Depot Town, the Historic Downtown, and West Cross.

The 2006 Washtenaw Area Transportation Systems (WATS) Non-motorized Plan quantified the city’s non-motorized accessibility to be over 80% of the city’s roadway miles. The plan concluded that the City provided for pedestrians adequately, but that a much higher portion of bicycle needs were not met (see Figure 11). Since this analysis was completed, no major progress has been made to reduce those deficiencies.

Many of the City’s efforts, while positive, have been done on an ad hoc, disconnected basis, occasionally leading to problems. Bike lanes on First Avenue, for example, were created during a resurfacing project without ample coordination with other projects or communication with the residents, leading to their later removal in favor of a parking lane.

In 2010, the City adopted a non-motorized plan with a more comprehensive treatment of non-motorized transportation policies and infrastructure – including

the incorporation of deficiencies identified in the county-wide non-motorized plan developed by WATS – and the Planning Commission created a Non-Motorized Transportation Subcommittee to guide its implementation. Currently, the non-motorized plan is being updated. In 2011, the City passed a Complete Streets Ordinance, which requires non-motorized components be considered as part of any road project.

Transit & Regional Transportation

Due to the high percentage of renters, young population and recent trends from automobile use either by choice or economic need, regional transportation is essential to the long-term stability, growth and prosperity of Ypsilanti. Be it rail or bus, Ypsilanti is a leader in participation and further development of a regional transportation system within Washtenaw County and the Detroit metropolitan area.

The City has long been a user of public transit, in past years purchasing service from the Ann Arbor Area Transit Authority (AAATA), and more recently becoming a member of the Authority, now called The Ride. Prior to 2013, the City operated under a purchased of service agreement. In 2010, in response to budget pressures, the City passed a voter-approved charter amendment to dedicate funding to the purchase of transit service. In 2013 the City was added as a charter member. As a new member of The Ride, no purchase agreement is required with the dedicated millage being passed along to The Ride.

The Ride has conducted long-range planning for the county beginning with a 30 year plan drafted in 2010. In 2014, voters passed a 0.7 mill tax to support AAATA services, and in 2018, renewed the millage with 83% support. As of 2017, ridership numbers hit 6.9 million trips that year after the millage helped increase services by 8,500 service hours in Ypsilanti.⁷ The millage will be levied through 2024; it is important that transit services continue. As of 2019, four routes run between Ann Arbor and the downtown Ypsilanti Transit Center; four more run from downtown into Ypsilanti Township.

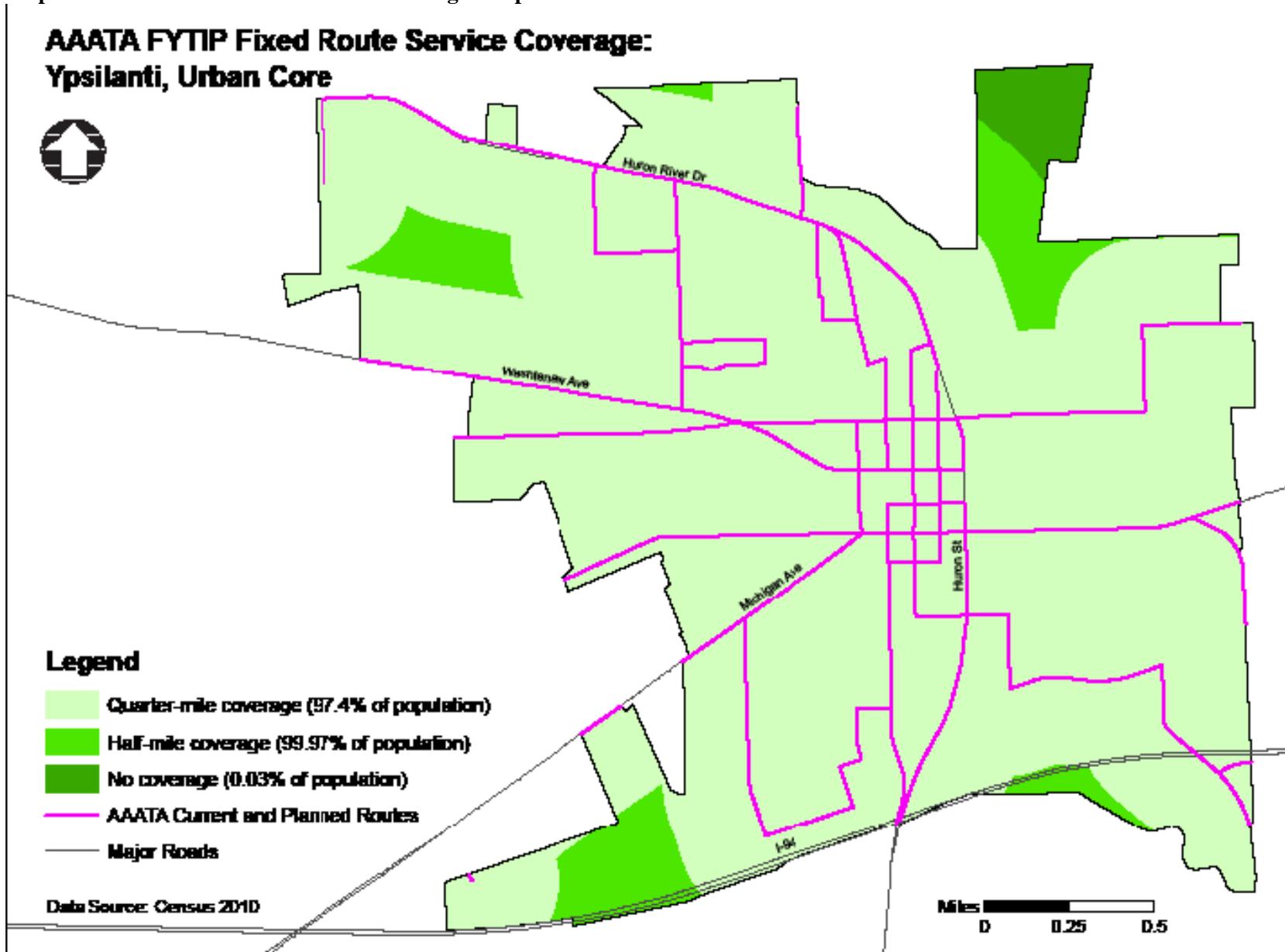
Eastern Michigan University additionally contracts with The Ride for a circulator shuttle around the main campus and to the business school in the Historic Downtown. EMU uses a separate transportation provider to provide shuttle service from a west-side parking lot on Hewitt to the main campus.

This portion of The Ride’s system saw a 10% increase in ridership from 2002 to 2009. Since becoming a regional bus service, The Ride no longer keeps track of individual jurisdiction’s ridership as it can be easily skewed. An increase in ridership is consistent with The Ride’s system-wide ridership trends, but also reflects state-wide and national trends of growing local and inter-city transit use. These trends, based on cost-consciousness around rising fuel prices, increased environmental awareness, and other factors, have contributed to interest in new modes of transportation. The map “AAATA Fixed Route Service Coverage in Ypsilanti” shows that about 97% of households are within a quarter-mile from one of The Ride’s routes.

The City of Ypsilanti was selected to be a test community for Miovision, a company devoted to developing smart cities. Miovision uses technology to monitor and collect transportation data; and as a test community, Ypsilanti now has access to this data. Figure 12 provides a summary of five Ypsilanti intersections and the various transportation modes using them. Based on this initial data, motor vehicles continue to be the dominant mode of transportation, though there is a noticeably larger number of pedestrians at both the LeForge Road and Huron River Drive intersection (4.62% mode share) and the Oakwood Street and Huron River Drive intersection (3.69% mode share), perhaps indicating priority intersections for improving pedestrian amenities.

When discussing ride-sharing apps in the subsequent *Cars, Trucks, and Streets* section, it is important to note that ride-sharing cannot fully replace transit as ride-sharing is not as accommodating to persons with children, persons with disabilities, and persons without smartphones. Ride-sharing, car-sharing, bike-sharing, etc. should not be intended to replace transit.

Map 10: AAATA Fixed Route Service Coverage in Ypsilanti



In the near term, Ypsilanti and the other communities along Washtenaw Avenue are considering improved transit service along that corridor, beginning with additional bus service and potentially growing into bus rapid transit or light rail service. Known as the “Reimagine Washtenaw” project, the upgrade would include key elements such as transit signal priority, queue jump lanes, limited stops, and super stop stations. If the full bus rapid transit were implemented, it is expected to cut 19 minutes off the trip from Ypsilanti to Ann Arbor.⁸

While Ypsilanti has not had passenger rail service since the 1980s, work is underway on Ann Arbor to Detroit commuter rail service that may propose a stop in Depot Town, along with service to Detroit Metro Airport and Dearborn. The system would also provide access from Ypsilanti to Amtrak service on the Chicago-Detroit-Pontiac line, which is planned for improvements as part of the Midwest High-Speed Rail Initiative. It is important to continue to consider future opportunities for both commuter and passenger rail.

Cars, Trucks, and Streets

Ypsilanti has seen an overall decrease in traffic over the past couple decades, due in large part to major industrial employers reducing their workforce or closing. The exception is the northern part of the City, where growth on the EMU and St. Joseph Mercy Hospital campuses has contributed to increased traffic. The County and Region have experienced a decrease in Vehicle Miles Travel (VMT) between 2002 and 2012. Long-range modeling done as part of the WATS 2045 Regional Transportation Plan forecasts an increasing population and employment opportunities which means an increase in traffic and congestion over the next quarter century. In a high growth scenario, vehicle miles traveled during peak morning and evening hours could increase by 30% and 33%, respectively after the addition of an estimated 2,000,000 more daily vehicle miles traveled. The encouraging news that 48.8% of trips made in 2015 were between zero to three miles,⁹ which means that improvements to nonmotorized infrastructure and increased bus service could help to remove vehicles making short trips from the road.

While traffic counts are done sporadically and are individually difficult to draw conclusions from, a sampling of recent and past counts from around the city shows that traffic volumes have been stagnant or declining somewhat over the 1990s and 2000s (see Figure 11). As noted, increases in traffic are largely attributed to the

main traffic generators in the area, primarily Eastern Michigan University but also Washtenaw Community College and St. Joseph’s hospital. Washtenaw County, as part of the Reimagine Washtenaw effort, is working with these institutions and others in the area to look at Traffic Demand Management practices that could further reduce vehicle miles traveled through programmatic changes and behavioral shifts to car-pooling, transit usage, walking, biking, etc.

Some of these trends are captured in Figure 11 that shows that most of the 19 intersections have reduced traffic volumes when compared to counts from five to ten years ago, and only modest increases in the remaining six. Interestingly, the newer counts would include trips made from ride-sharing apps, despite research showing that in larger cities ride-sharing increases congestion. There is little consensus on how ride-sharing apps affect car ownership but there is speculation that the original ownership model is less popular among youth. Financially, in some cases it is more affordable to forgo monthly payments for pay-as-you-go rides.¹⁰ However, because the data is collected by private companies, cities are somewhat in the dark about the extent to which these services are being used. This is trend worth watching closely because it may help determine how streets are shaped, for example, the development of drop-off and pick-up zones as opposed to parking lot requirements. Car-sharing, electric vehicle charging and bike parking can be practical first steps in terms of existing infrastructure. The zoning ordinance was updated to incentivize these alternatives, as Walkable Urban Districts offer parking requirement discounts for including such infrastructure.

In recent years, traffic safety in Ypsilanti has improved both on in terms of number of crashes at major intersections and relative to the Washtenaw County region. Some of this may be attributed to flat or declining traffic volumes in the city, compared to growing volumes elsewhere in the County. As shown in Figure 13, the City has five of the forty highest-ranked intersections in Washtenaw County in terms of annual average crash rate. Since the adoption of the Master Plan in 2013, the top two have shifted only slightly in their relative ranking, however the top three thru five have significantly fallen, implying these intersections have become safer relative to the rest of the County. Hamilton St. and Huron St. remain common occurrences as one-way streets making this ranking.

Figure 11: Intersection Traffic Volumes

Street	Location	Year	Daily Volume	Comparison Year	Comparison Volume	% change	Annual % change
Michigan Avenue	East of Huron	2015	21,800	2010	21,325	2.23%	0.44%
	East of Hamilton (downtown)	2018	19,100	2009	22,484	-15.05%	-1.80%
	SW of Congress	2017	14,000	2006	12,585	11.24%	0.97%
Washtenaw Avenue	NW of Mansfield	2018	26,000	2007	26,783	-2.92%	-0.27%
	NW of Oakwood	2018	25,300	2004	26,336	-3.93%	-0.29%
Prospect Street	South of Maus/Spring	2017	7,300	2005	9,913	-26.36%	-2.52%
	South of Holmes	2017	8,400	2005	8,325	0.90%	0.07%
Cross Street	West of River (Depot Town)	2015	13,500	2006	10,246	31.76%	3.11%
	West of Wallace	2006	8,180	1994	n/a	16.00%	-1.30%
Harriet / Spring	East of Hawkins	2017	5,600	2005	4,850	15.46%	1.21%
	West of Huron	2017	11,300	2006	13,619	-17.03%	-1.68%
Hamilton	South of Harriet	2018	12,300	2009	15,511	-20.70%	-2.54%
Huron	South of Harriet	2018	16,600	2009	16,059	3.37%	0.37%
Leforge	North of Huron River Drive	2015	7,600	2006	12,906	-41.11%	-5.71%
Huron River Drive	East of Hewitt	2016	14,100	2008	16,519	-14.64%	-1.96%
River	North of Michigan	2004	4,095	1994	n/a	14.00%	-1.40%
Mansfield	South of Cross	2004	3,907	1994	n/a	14.00%	1.40%
First	South of Michigan	2004	4,600	2004	n/a	-2.00%	-0.40%
Grove	North of Spring	2012	2,300	2004	2,702	-14.88%	-1.99%

Italicized cells indicate that base year is approximate
Source: SEMCOG

Figure 12: Intersections and Mode Share Data for Select Ypsilanti Intersections

Huron Street and Cross Street		
	Total	Mode Share
Pedestrians	304	1.48%
Bike	78	0.38%
Road / Bike Lane	29	
Crosswalk	49	
E-Scooters	0	0%
Road / Bike Lane	0	
Crosswalk	0	
Vehicles	20,158	98.14%
Passenger Vehicles	19,695	
Heavy Trucks	463	
Oakwood Street and Huron River		
	Total	Mode Share
Pedestrians	716	3.69%
Bike	39	0.20%
Road / Bike Lane	10	
Crosswalk	29	
E-Scooters	1	0.01%
Road / Bike Lane	0	
Crosswalk	1	
Vehicles	18,628	96.10%
Passenger Vehicles	18,221	
Heavy Trucks	407	

Leforge Road and Huron River Drive		
	Total	Mode Share
Pedestrians	985	4.62%
Bike	53	0.25%
Road / Bike Lane	20	
Crosswalk	33	
E-Scooters	0	0%
Road / Bike Lane	0	
Crosswalk	0	
Vehicles	20,275	95.13%
Passenger Vehicles	19,827	
Heavy Trucks	448	
Hamilton Street and Washtenaw		
	Total	Mode Share
Pedestrians	454	2.45%
Bike	31	0.17%
Road / Bike Lane	6	
Crosswalk	25	
E-Scooters	1	0.01%
Road / Bike Lane	1	
Crosswalk	0	
Vehicles	18,074	97.38%
Passenger Vehicles	17,559	
Heavy Trucks	515	

Huron Street and Michigan Avenue		
	Total	Mode Share
Pedestrians	915	2.41%
Bike	70	0.18%
Road / Bike Lane	24	
Crosswalk	46	
E-Scooters	1	0%
Road / Bike Lane	0	
Crosswalk	1	
Vehicles	37,026	97.41%
Passenger Vehicles	35,696	
Heavy Trucks	1,330	

Figure 13: Annual Crash Rate, 2014-2018

City Rank	County Rank	Intersection	Avg. # Crash Rate
1	3	Huron St. at Michigan Ave.	34.2
2	12	Washtenaw Ave. at Hewitt Rd.	29.0
3	21	Hamilton St. at Michigan Ave.	25.2
4	29	Huron River Dr. at Oakwood St.	19.0
5	40	Hamilton St. at Harriet St.	17.0

Data Source: SEMCOG

Transportation Summary

The following transportation factors have implications for policies in the Master Plan:

- The non-motorized network has a number of deficiencies. Public input during the process asked for better bicycle lanes and access throughout the City.
- More transit riders are using The Ride bus routes in the City. The City should continue to support and strengthen- and if possible, expand- the service.
- The City should implement designs for streets to be safe and comfortable for pedestrians, focusing on intersections with higher pedestrian counts.
- Daily train service, while the time line is uncertain and likely several years off, would have major positive impacts for Ypsilanti’s core. More demand for housing would be expected within a quarter mile radius, an easy 10-minute walk, of the train depot.
- The volume of vehicle traffic and the number of crashes has decreased. Improvements should continue to make streets safer but also should recognize that cyclists and pedestrians use the roadways as well, and not default to vehicular improvements over those for non-motorized users.
- Crashes are concentrated on the one-way streets. The speed limit of some of those streets were recently raised by the State of Michigan. The past Master Plan recommended these streets return to two-way traffic, with phasing of the work taking place. See Chapter 5- Transportation for details of the phasing approach.

Chapter 4 – City Framework

“We are not the suburbs.” – Proposed Guiding Value at Focus Group

This Master Plan is a fundamental shift to view the City as an urban system with a framework of interconnected parts, shown on the Framework Map (Map 11). The map, taking the place of a future land use map in a traditional plan, also provides guidance to the community and developers to the context of the built environment. The Framework Map will set the design context and guide the development form of the city through form based regulations. It has centers, corridors, districts and neighborhoods that include unique building forms within the City of Ypsilanti summarized below:

Centers are the heart beats of the City – downtown, Depot Town and Cross Street adjacent to the EMU campus. Each area has buildings built up to the sidewalk and a variety of uses - retail, restaurants, services, office, civic, and residential. They are places where people walk, gather, shop, exchange and meet.

The plan proposes to build on the strengths and improve the weaknesses of these areas to make them great places. Hamilton, Huron, Cross Street and Washtenaw Avenue are proposed to become two-way streets, putting pedestrians and cyclists on even footing with automobiles. Future ordinances will preserve the architecture of these areas, while requiring natural surveillance to improve safety. Policies will also enable the continued re-use and redevelopment of buildings, increasing their sustainability. Specific plans for each area are shown in Chapter 6, including design plans for Depot Town to prepare for the planned commuter rail station. A redevelopment concept plan and design standards for the Water Street area are in Chapter 10.

Neighborhoods are where homes are clustered together, along with small-scale other uses that serve the people that live there (such as a corner store, a school, church or library). Each of the dozens of neighborhoods in Ypsilanti has its own character, influenced by the size and architecture of the buildings, the layout of the streets, parks and the people who live there. Neighborhoods fall into two categories, discussed in Chapter 7:

Central Neighborhoods are among the oldest in Ypsilanti. Initially oriented on the Huron River, they are built on a grid street network connected to the adjacent business districts. They border downtown,

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Depot Town and EMU. These neighborhoods have a range of residential building types, with churches, schools, stores and gas stations intermixed. Around the railroad, industrial uses are mixed into the neighborhood.

Under this plan, the mix of uses will follow the pattern of current zoning. However, the building’s form would be regulated, including those outside of the historic district, to maintain the character of the area. Regulations for two-family and multiple-family options would be collapsed into clear rules based on the number of housing units- with categories for duplexes, group living arrangements, 2-4 units and 5 or more units. When developing the form-based code zoning, the building types, uses and setbacks will be calibrated to preserve the character of these neighborhoods.

Outlying Neighborhoods were built in the middle or later part of the 20th century and were designed as areas for a single type of housing, either single-family or multi-family. These neighborhoods are adjacent to a corridor but the street network is designed to carry traffic into the neighborhood, not through it. Any non-residential uses, other than schools or parks, are located at the edges, not embedded within the neighborhood.

These neighborhoods will have uses limited to the type of residential for which they were built. In some areas, like the Heritage Park neighborhood in the southwest part of the City, zoning would be changed so that duplexes and group homes would no longer be allowed by right. As many of these areas have aging populations, the City needs to be concerned about the stability of these neighborhoods as demographics shift. Accessory Dwelling Units, for example, can be an affordable and accessible housing type for the aging population.

Corridors are the streets that connect the City together, and sometimes divide it. They are the arteries of transportation into, around and through the City. Two types of corridors exist in Ypsilanti:

Historic Corridors connect the centers of the City with each other and the surrounding neighborhoods. They are dominated by large, historic homes now used in a variety of ways – residences, office, retail. Houses of worship and other civic buildings also line these corridors, interspersed with smaller homes. The transportation plan sees restoration of two-way traffic to the one-way historic corridors of Huron, Hamilton and Cross. It also proposes the extension of River Street through the Water Street redevelopment area to Factory in the next twenty years. Uses will remain flexible allowing the historic buildings to accommodate changing markets and traffic patterns.

General Corridors are streets that connect the City to neighboring municipalities and the centers. Many of the corridors – Ecorse, East Michigan, West Michigan and along many of these corridors no longer accommodate the larger 21st century footprint of suburban style buildings with parking in front and lawns on all sides. The new pattern proposed in this Plan will allow parking on the street and require buildings to be closer to the street; with minimal yards, lots will have more buildable area for residential, commercial and office uses mixed throughout.

Other corridors – Huron River Drive and Harriet – have one type of building on one side of the street and a distinctly different situation on the other side of the street. Future regulations would require, where possible, the two sides of the street mirror one another. In twenty years, the dignity of Harriet Street should be restored to a walkable shopping district for the adjoining neighborhoods. Huron River Drive should become a point of integration between the campus of Eastern Michigan and the City. Addition of sidewalks, crosswalks and bicycle lanes are essential to transitioning this street from a dividing line geared only to move vehicles to a place where the City and campus meet seamlessly. Chapter 8 provides more detail for each of these areas.

Districts are parts of the city dedicated to a single type of activity, like Eastern Michigan University, the office and medical area on Towner, and the industrial areas of the City in the south. The challenge is to use the street network design to

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integrate them into the City while assuring that students, faculty, workers and suppliers can reach their destinations easily.

Eastern Michigan University’s campus, which is not within the regulatory jurisdiction of the City, will be preserved and improved by joint planning and cooperation between the City and EMU, as part of a Campus master plan process. The confusing confluence of Cross and Washtenaw is proposed to become the front door for the EMU campus.

The office and medical area clustered on Towner in the eastern part of the City is also an asset that can be better integrated into the physical environment. Future policies will aim to preserve and enhance the buildings, while making walking, biking and taking transit to these offices easier.

The cemetery in the northern part of the City will be preserved.

The industrial areas in the south of the City represent the best hopes for a revitalized employment area. The industrial park in the southwest corner of the city has no vacancies, but could be reconfigured to accommodate additional businesses. The industrial property in the southeast corner is vacant or underutilized. The former Motorwheel site is also a potential job center. Industrial areas around the railroad provide jobs and could be places for additional workshops. Chapter 10 details plans and options to attract job centers to these properties.

ZONING – FORM-BASED CODE

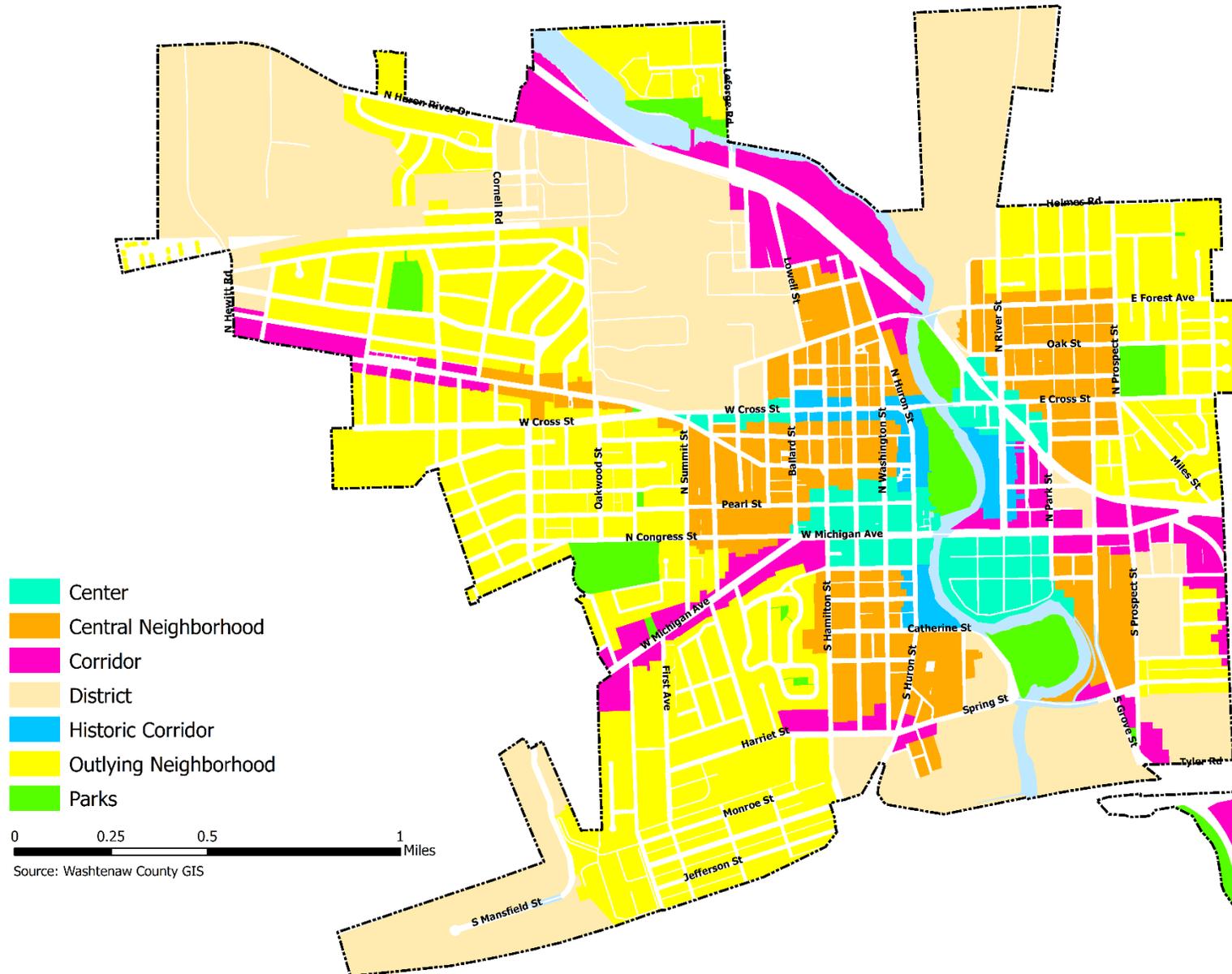
The chief mechanism for implementing the Master Plan in Michigan is the Zoning Ordinance. In 2019, the City completed a zoning ordinance update that was user-friendly and implemented form-based elements; the use of illustrations clarified technical text and prescriptive regulations were translated into standards that emphasized design standards to address building orientation, parking location, architectural treatments, and building typologies that are better suited to its context. In that way, more space was made for mixed-use developments while

older neighborhood's with highly separated uses were preserved but uses and design elements were expanded in those zones where practical.

In contrast to the previous zoning ordinance, Ypsilanti's updated ordinance focuses on how development relates to the context of the surrounding community, especially the relationships between buildings and the street, pedestrians and vehicles, and public and private spaces. The Walkable Urban Districts are the ordinance's form-based characterization, as these districts especially emphasize building typologies, building orientation, and site standards. While uses are still regulated in these districts, more strict design standards are provided here to ensure compatibility with the existing neighborhood.

DRAFT

Map 11: City Framework Map



DRAFT

Chapter 5 – Transportation

“Reward the short trip” – Consultant Team member during Discover Charrette

The streets of the City were laid out in the late 19th and early 20th century. The transportation structure changed in the mid 20th century with the creation of one-way streets with the interchange with Interstate 94 and Huron. A large workforce moved in and out of the City daily at that time. Today, the streets do not handle the same type or volume of traffic. Meanwhile, the one-way streets are among the most dangerous in Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County.

In addition, the transportation within Ypsilanti is changing. The communities along the Washtenaw corridor are planning for rapid bus service along Washtenaw Avenue, increasing the capacity and frequency of the most heavily travelled bus line for Ann Arbor Transportation Authority, called The Ride. Four time a day commuter rail service connecting Detroit to Ann Arbor is anticipated to begin in 2016. Several bicycle paths and lanes, including the Border-to-Border trail spanning Washtenaw County, have been constructed or are on the drawing board, to provide safe routes for cyclists.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Map 12 shows the proposed transportation improvements for the City. These changes were developed during the two charrettes held in the Spring of 2013 and then refined through focus groups in the summer of that year. They represent a twenty-year vision for the transportation network of the City.

PRIORITIES

Street changes or improvements are usually expensive and time-consuming. The transportation changes proposed here are daunting for a small city with fiscal challenges. With that in mind, the following values should guide prioritization of funds and staff time for transportation efforts:

Reward the short trip

Any street network change should facilitate the walk between neighborhoods, bike to work in the City or bus trip or car ride across town. It should not help regional through-travelers to the detriment of those traveling within the city.

Follow the money, and be ready for opportunities

Funding is usually available for on-going initiatives, such as resurfacing, underground utility work that digs up the street, development projects, etc. The City should pursue grant funding with match requirements within its budget as well as creative partnerships to advance the goals of this plan. If funding is available for one project or idea but not another, the City should be flexible to advance its goals and projects within the spirit of this plan.

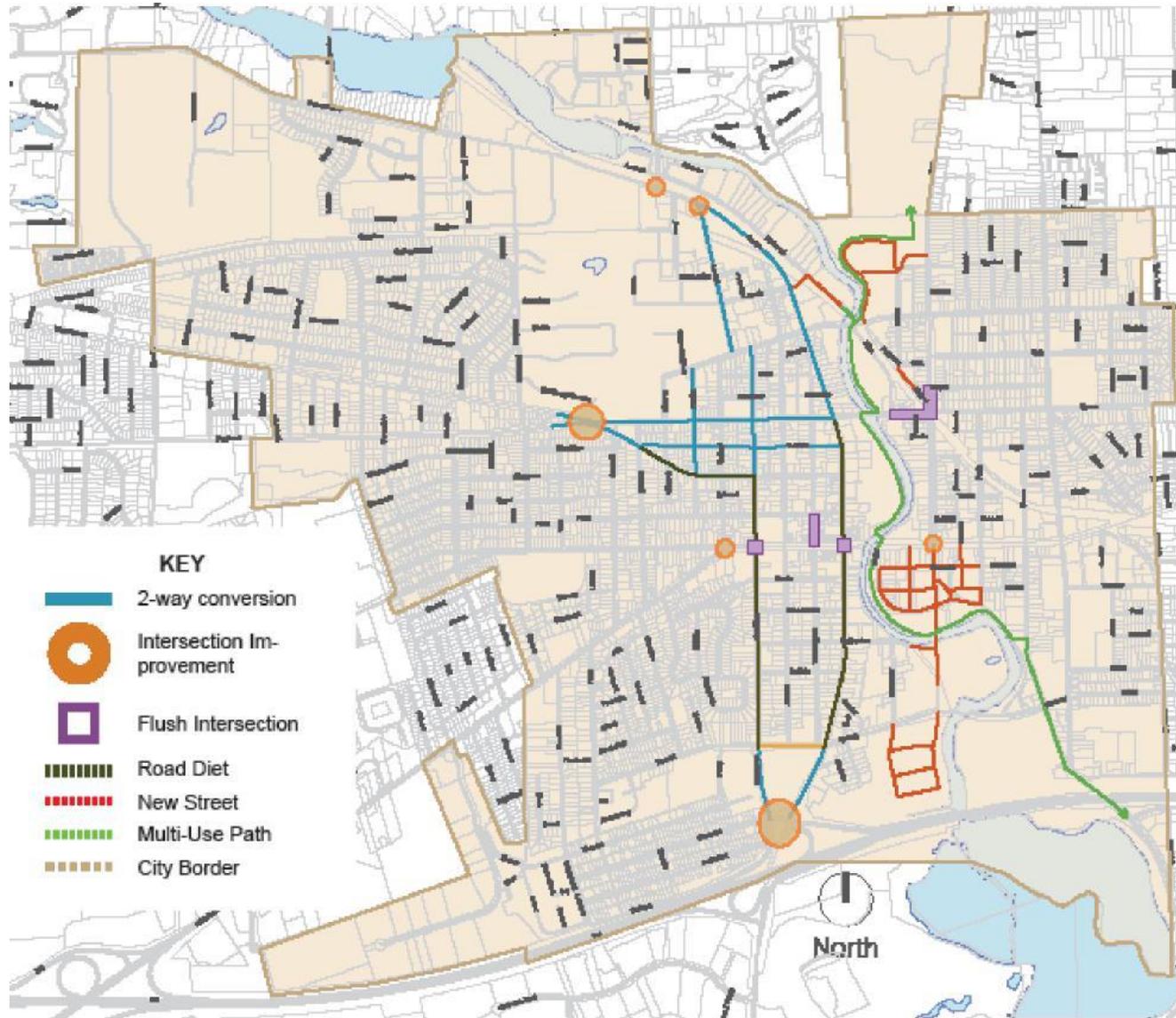
Make the streets better, not wider

City resources should not be used to add turn lanes, widen roads, or other means of conventionally fighting congestion in the City, when other options are available. Instead, spend City money, grants, State and Federal dollars on adding value to the place, the walkability, the aesthetics and making the streets safe. A possible exception to this rule is the conversion of a travel lane to a turn lane with the conversion of a 4-lane road to three lanes.

If car-carrying capacity is needed, it can be achieved by:

- adding new, two-lane, two-way streets to the network;
- making connections in the network that were previously severed;
- shortening trip lengths by reducing circuitous routing (i.e., restoring two-way operation, removing turn prohibitions, breaking up super-blocks);
- shortening trip lengths by adding density and rich mix of land uses in the downtown and centers; and converting automobile trips into walking, cycling, and transit trips by all of the means above plus traffic calming, building regulations that make a comfortable environment for people as well as cars, and building complete streets that are comfortable for vehicular and non-automobile modes of transportation.

Map 12: Transportation Project Map



Design with the community, not for it

When a project has been funded and is on the drawing board, the engineers and designers should talk with the community about options and suggestions before the design is final. The people using the streets everyday have valuable insight and should be included early on in the process, as mandated by the City's Complete Streets Ordinance. The public engagement process should be updated with lessons learned by each project.

TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

The projects shown on Map 12 were developed during the two charrettes held in March and April of 2013. The projects were later vetted by the community through postings on Facebook and focus groups. These projects are described in detail below. The suggested phasing is based on a combination of expert advice and community backing. They fall into five categories: city-initiated projects, Historic Downtown projects, projects built as part of new developments, and street policy changes.

CITY-INITIATED PROJECTS

The City will decide through its Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), required by the State of Michigan, what project to move forward first. Projects for the next five years are listed below with descriptions in order of priority, as suggested by the consultant team and then advised by community input:

Coordination of pedestrian-bike connection across the I-94 interchanges at Huron and Hamilton

WATS facilitates collaboration among partner communities and stakeholders to formalize plans for a pedestrian-bike connection across the highway. City staff will coordinate efforts to ensure that they are compatible with and without the proposed roundabout at Harriet to facilitate the return to two-way function of Huron and Hamilton. During the Summer 2013 focus groups, residents felt a pedestrian connection over I-94 was a priority for completion in the next five years. Many walk or bike to the shopping, parks and other facilities in Ypsilanti Township and find the trip treacherous. [The city is currently working on a Transportation Alternatives Program grant with Ypsilanti Township and the Michigan Department of Transportation \(MDOT\) to start this project.](#)

Cross St. and Washtenaw Ave. as part of the Re-Imagine Washtenaw Plan

The confluence of the one-way streets of Cross Street and Washtenaw Avenue at the southern edge of the EMU campus is one of the most confusing intersections in Ypsilanti. Due to the wide roadway, pedestrian crossing is dangerous. In order to create a safer, more appealing place, the transportation plan recommends the separation of the two streets, and returning each to two-way function (see Figure 19 in the next chapter). [While this remains a long term goal, a nearer goal is to consider squaring-off the West Cross and Washtenaw intersection and eliminating the slip lanes, to create better crossing and bus infrastructure. This should be coordinated with the AAATA.](#)

[Proposed improvements to Washtenaw from Normal Street to Ballard Street include parking on the north side, and then Washtenaw will return to a three-lane road from Ballard Street to Hamilton Street.](#)

Reimagine Washtenaw is a cooperative planning and transportation effort between four jurisdictions and multiple transportation agencies to transform the Washtenaw Corridor between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti by improving mass transportation, providing safe bicycle and pedestrian networks, rethinking land use, and creating coordinated standards that transform the corridor from a necessary but unpleasant experience, to a desirable, safe, and useful one. The incremental results of this work will not only create a highly-functioning, multi-modal corridor, with sense of place, but also facilitate public investment, thereby increasing property values over time by attracting new private investment.

Each local jurisdiction, Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti Township, and Pittsfield Township, is working toward uniform standards in regard to providing sidewalks, bicycle lanes, on-street parking where appropriate, and related land use standards that will put redevelopment on a pedestrian scale, with pedestrian facilities throughout the corridor. The transportation agencies, The Ride, Michigan Department of Transportation, Washtenaw County Road Commission, and Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) are working together on a long-term concept for road design and right-of-way requirements that will allow for the bicycle and pedestrian improvements, on-street parking where appropriate, with the potential for a dedicated transit lane or light-rail in the long term.

As part of the 2013 Right-of Way study facilitated by Washtenaw County on behalf of the local jurisdictions, preferred street segments are being developed for the entire corridor. Future use scenarios were also determined, and many recommendations are based on traffic volume reductions that are expected to be gained through land use changes, traffic demand management practices to be adopted by major area employers, and related transportation mode shifts. Throughout the entire corridor, innovative stormwater management systems, beautification and landscaping, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes are planned.

For the segment in the Ypsilanti city limits (from west to east), a narrow landscaped median is recommended from Hewitt to approximately the Courtland intersection to provide refuge for pedestrian crossings, improve aesthetics, and slow traffic. East of that a transition is recommended to reduce from four travel lanes to two, adding on-street parking on both sides of the street, until east of Oakwood. At that point, with the separation of Cross and Washtenaw and a change from one-way to two-way traffic, on-street parking may only fit on one side of the new streets. It is suggested that it stay on the north side of the street by EMU, to provide easy parking for administrators and students.

Return one way to two way streets

These streets are not friendly to pedestrians due to the high speed of vehicles. The one-way streets are also difficult to navigate and create longer trips for pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and motorists. A long term goal of returning the two-way functions of these streets would support the urban framework. To get to this long term goal, the City would like to take a phased approach.

Phase one could include “right-sizing” the roads for their vehicle capacity. Within these roads’ current configurations, some improvements can be made to improve nonmotorized and public transit access. For instance, on Hamilton Street starting at the intersection with Pearl Street, the right-most lane becomes a bicycle lane. The right-most lanes on Hamilton St. and Huron St. between Michigan and Harriet will become bicycle lanes. The right-most lane on Huron St. south of Harriet will become landscaping. In terms of Washtenaw Ave., the left-most lane will become on-street parking between Normal and Ballard.

Phase two could include the squaring up of curved intersections, and removal of slip lanes. For example, improving the West Cross and Washtenaw intersection would mean teeing up the intersection and providing additional green space and improved bus facilities in lieu of the slip lane.

Phase three would then be the two-way conversion. Long-term land use planning should be mindful of the possible excess of land that results from the conversions.

Figure 14: Roundabout for Two-Way Conversion



The drawing above shows a roundabout to facilitate two-way conversions of Huron and Hamilton, while maintaining safe access to Interstate-94. In this instance, cooperation with the existing warehousing facility would be needed. Based on online and in person feedback, the Ypsilanti community has a love/hate relationship with roundabouts. Other design options exist and should be explored with community input when plans are being developed. Drawing by: AECOM

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN PROJECTS

Several of the transportation projects are located in the Historic Downtown. These projects could be carried out in conjunction with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and should be included in any updates of the DDA Tax Increment Financing Plan:

Raised intersections at Huron & Michigan Avenue and Hamilton & Michigan Avenue

While it was initially hoped that a ramp for pedestrians and a “table top” with a gentle incline to slow down vehicles, this is not currently plausible because it is not in the Michigan Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Washington Street as a flush festival street

Washington Street, between Pearl Street and Michigan Avenue, is often closed to traffic for concerts. Changing surfaces to a curbsless street would create more pedestrian friendly event space (see figure 15).

Figure 15: Curbsless “Festival” Street Example



Source: AECOM

NEW DEVELOPMENT

Many of these projects should be wrapped into anticipated development in adjacent areas, both private and public:

Cross Street and River Street in Depot Town as flush festival streets

With a new train stop near the intersection of Cross Street and River Street, more pedestrian and event activity is expected in Depot Town. Cross Street is already often used for events. Curbsless streets will help pedestrians navigate and ease of events. Drivers of vehicles know where the traffic lanes and pedestrian areas are by different types of materials, both color and texture, as well as bollards or other street furniture. The cost and design should be coordinated with the new train stop and incorporated into the DDA TIF plan.

Vehicular Bridge and extension of River Street to Factory

One of the most expensive proposals in the transportation plan is to extend River Street from Michigan Avenue across the Huron River to Factory Street, in coordination with the Water Street redevelopment. The extension would connect the Water Street redevelopment area to the highway but also link the neighborhoods in the southeastern part of the City with the Historic Downtown. Grant opportunities, coordination with developers and other funding resources should be explored.

New Streets in Redevelopment Areas

New streets are shown in several redevelopment areas. These streets should be built by the developer but in accordance with a structure and design that meets the community’s guiding value of walkability. The Water Street area is owned by the City, which could dictate street design as a condition of sale. For the other areas, zoning and design requirements should be updated to mandate a walkable street grid that connects and completes the existing streets.

Multi-Use Paths

Multi-use paths are shown connecting Railroad Street and the cemetery in the northern part of the city to Frog Island Park. Both areas are underutilized and could redevelop in the next ten years, especially when rail service begins. Pedestrian links to job centers in the districts should also be built. For example, the City holds an easement that could be used for a path to connect the industrial park

to the neighborhood to the southwest. Regulations should be updated to seek easements for proposed paths in these areas.

STREET POLICY CHANGES

Two areas of the City are proposed for overall changes to the streets to make them more accessible to everyone:

Harriet Street Road Diet

Harriet, from Huron to Perry, should become a two-lane street with on-street parking and sidewalks separated from the roadway. The City should change the design standards for Harriet. The City may want to consider a road diet continuing east on Harriet/Spring/ Factory/Maus but maintaining the ability of trucks to access the job district.

Leforge Road and Huron River Drive Reconfiguration

The intersection at Leforge and Huron River Drive is challenging to pedestrians but is where many EMU students live and walk to campus. Within a ten-minute walk are some of the largest multiple-family complexes in the City, a city park and

EMU campus. The City should make it a high priority work with EMU to create a vision for this area as an interconnection between the City and the University. Both the University and the City should then update their plans and policies for the area accordingly. The level of detail, coordination and community input warrant a planning process for this area specifically. If funding is available, an intense design process should be part of the five-year update to this plan.

PROGRAMS

Two programs are part of the master plan to increase the ability of people to use any modes of transportation they choose anywhere in the City:

- Expand car sharing program in the Historic Downtown. *Additionally, bikeshare could be programmed into the three core districts.*
- Create and publish maps with bicycle and walking routes in the City. *These may be interactive maps as well, accessed via the website or a mobile application.*

DRAFT

Chapter 6 – Centers

“The heartbeat of any community are place places to gather, especially on a social level.” -Facebook comment about post asking how to strengthen centers

There are three centers within the City of Ypsilanti – the Historic Downtown, Depot Town and Cross Street. They are active, synergistic places where people come together. Their historic buildings are the calling cards of the City. These are the places where people shop, go to school, live, come to work, visit, drop by City Hall, eat, gather and have fun. They host events which bring thousands of visitors each year and bring the City together as a community. All three centers are in the City’s Downtown Development Authority (DDA), supported by the tax increment revenue generated from the DDA.

PAST POLICIES

In adjusting to the shift from a manufacturing economy, Ypsilanti has focused on small business development, especially within the centers. The City has worked to maintain low barriers of entry for new businesses, and encourages entrepreneurs to start up businesses. However, new construction is limited due to physical constraints of the City, among other factors.

The City has successfully encouraged conversion of upper stories in the Historic Downtown and Depot Town into housing. The units brought onto the market in the past decade have been rented or sold quickly.

More recent economic development efforts have focused on placemaking as well as absorbing existing commercial and residential vacancies. Walkability, regional public transit, and work toward securing commuter train service on the Ann Arbor to Detroit Line are current transportation goals.

PUBLIC INPUT FROM 2013

Input about the centers was gathered in focus groups, the 4-day long Discover Charrette and through social media. Across the board, participants felt the centers were great places that should be preserved but could be improved in terms of cleanliness, safety and walkability.

Public input was positive about the Historic Downtown, with emphasis on preservation of the historic buildings. Participants felt the walkability and safety of the area could be improved, as well as the cleanliness of the streets and parking lots. Many participants felt there were too many bars and restaurants while others wanted these types of gathering place. The adult club was also a

source of tension, with many wanting it to be removed and others saying it should be left alone.

Depot Town was continually cited as an asset of Ypsilanti, to be built upon and improved. Many supported the opening of daily commuter rail service in Depot Town, with a few citing safety concerns such as how to accommodate long-term parking and improved bicycle and pedestrian connections.

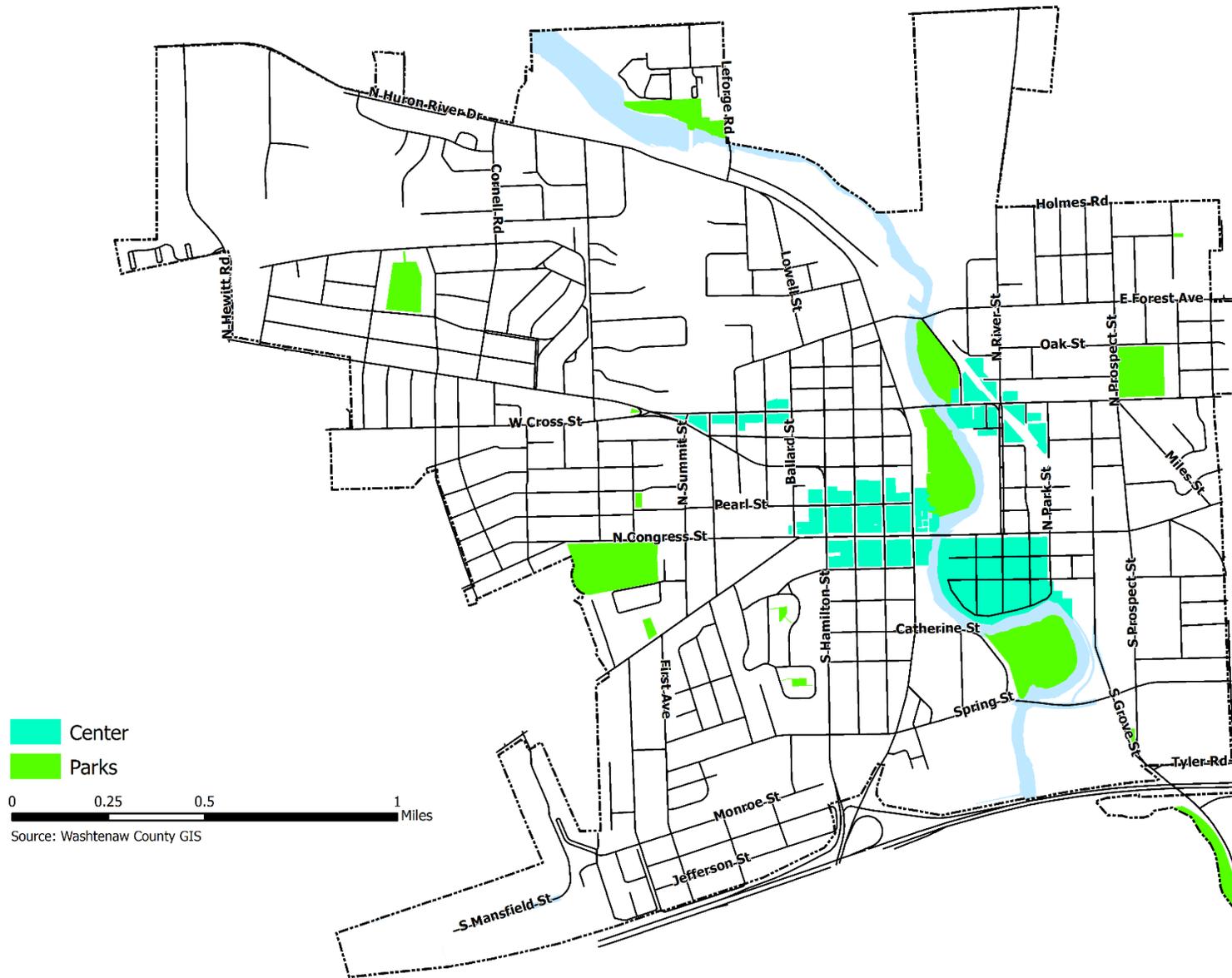
The Cross Street area was generally seen as positive, with much improvement in the past five to seven years. The focus group with EMU students requested that stores be open later at night, when they are most likely to use them. The intersection of Cross and Washtenaw as well as the one-way streets was seen as a barrier to pedestrians and vehicles easily navigating the area.

DATA

According the commercial analysis for this project, the centers are three strong commercial anchor locations that provide a wide range of specialty goods and services. The devoted resident base and healthy EMU market provide a strong customer base for these businesses. Market analysis completed for these areas by Hyett Palma in 2009 concluded that the Ypsilanti DDA area captures approximately 10%, or about \$121 million of the estimated region’s demand at \$1.1 billion annual demand. This study, now about a decade old, should be updated to determine if the DDA’s policies have been able to capture a greater of that demand.

These locations have limitations to growth, due to the historic building stock. Focus group participants described these as ideal locations for small to mid-sized operations that could fit a first-floor foot print of 2,000 – 4,000 square feet. Some businesses have been successful at expanding into neighboring storefronts, but the reality of growth is fairly limited for a major food store, entertainment complex or larger footprint a national clothing retailer would require. A few buildings with larger footprints are available - the Thompson Block in Depot Town as well as the Smith Furniture Building and the Pub 13 building in the Historic Downtown.

Map 13: Centers City Framework Map



POLICY UPDATE FROM 2013

Certain actions will apply to all three centers, in particular the form-based zoning. The following are expected in the Historic Downtown, Depot Town, and Cross Street:

Create building standards for centers that preserve their architecture - Completed

All three centers have unique, historic buildings that have been protected by the regulations of the historic district. In 2014, the zoning ordinance was passed with form-based zoning elements that require building location, story height, front door and window location to match the existing architecture, reinforcing existing patterns and the historic district regulations.

Finish Upper Stories - Ongoing

Upper story conversions in the Historic Downtown and Depot Town have been successful, bringing new residents. The zoning ordinance was updated to encourage private investment on upper story units, and in 2018, the DDA was awarded a MEDC facade grant for \$300,000 which has enabled them to improve properties according to historic guidelines. The City shall work to update its local and National Register historic district listings. Updated listings will expand the number of contributing buildings and afford greater opportunities for Historic Tax Credits in rehabilitations.

Allow renewable energy facilities on all buildings - Completed

The City has several buildings in the centers with solar panels and geothermal facilities, such as City Hall and the Ypsilanti Food Coop. The zoning ordinance was updated in 2014 to allow alternative energy (photovoltaic, geothermal, and wind) as an accessory use in every zone. The Historic District Commission has adopted alternative energy standards to guide the installation of such facilities on historic buildings.

Draft a business attraction plan for the centers - Ongoing

The City, Small Business and Technology Development Center, Ann Arbor SPARK, and the DDA should work together to create a process to guide business attraction for Downtown, Depot Town and Cross Street.

Encourage activity during the day and evening – Ongoing

A number of participants, especially EMU students and other youth, expressed a desire for opportunity in the City's centers during the evening as well as the day. Many felt there was not much available after hours except for bars. The DDA and the City should work together with existing businesses to expand their hours and factor the need for evening uses that are friendly to people of all ages into

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the business attraction plan. Changes should be communicated to EMU faculty, staff, and students who would be a big portion of patrons.

The City has updated its zoning to allow for a greater mix of uses that could draw people to its centers, and the DDA continues to work on business development through event sponsorship like First Fridays, Ypsi Pride, Festival of the Honey Bee, and Ypsi Glow.

Continue and expand the number, type and location of festivals and events - Ongoing

Events bring thousands of visitors and residents alike to the centers of Ypsilanti. If it can, the DDA and Ypsilanti Convention and Visitor's Bureau, supported by the City, should increase the number of events and make sure they occur across the City centers and in all four seasons. Options could include the use of College Place, other areas in and around EMU's campus, Frog Island and other large City parks as well as downtown streets. The City works with the Convention and Visitor's Bureau to market events and destinations in Ypsilanti. The city also passed a special events policy to enable more activity.

Create a marketing campaign for the City of Ypsilanti - Ongoing

Throughout the public engagement process, participants felt that the City had an undeserved reputation in the region as an unsafe place with not much to do. A marketing campaign, in conjunction with the Ypsilanti Visitors and Convention Bureau, was suggested as a five-year goal.

Install a way-finding system - Completed

The DDA, city of Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti township, and the Washtenaw County Convention and Visitor's Bureau installed unified wayfinding signage throughout the city and township to help visitors find places to shop and recreate.

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

Historic Downtown Ypsilanti is located at the intersection of M-12, the old Chicago Road, and the Huron River. The plan for downtown is to make it safer and maintain its diversity and sustainability. These following items, except for zoning changes, should be included as part of the update of the DDA's Tax Increment Financing Plan and pursued in conjunction with consensus of the business community downtown.

Increase walkability - Ongoing

The return of Huron and Hamilton to two-way streets will increase the walkability of the Historic Downtown by slowing traffic. The raised intersections on Michigan at Huron and Hamilton will also slow traffic and making crossing these intersections easier for pedestrians. Ypsilanti has completed a feasibility study and is in the public participation phase. The city has incorporated these projects in the Capital Improvement Plan and is coordinating with MDOT for assistance on completing this project.

Build curbless “festival” street on Washington - Ongoing

A curbless street on Washington, between Michigan Avenue and Pearl, would make set up and operation of outdoor concerts already occurring there easier. Most likely, more events could be held there, increasing the diversity of events and visitors to the downtown.

Use vacant storefronts for temporary retail uses - Ongoing

Any number of vacant storefronts diminish the vibrancy of downtown. Also, many entrepreneurs cannot afford to open a full scale operation. By defining a process to allow a “pop-up” store in vacant storefront, the City and the DDA have enabled this temporary use. However, it is still up to the property owner to decide how to use his/her building. The DDA does conduct outreach to landlords, but the effort continues to make this a consistent practice.

Maintain and expand transportation options, including improvements to the Ypsilanti Transit Center (YTC) - Ongoing

Bus service to the downtown should continue as well as the expansion of the car sharing service. The bus center should be treated as a hub of the downtown, with wayfinding, signs, and street furniture to make coming to the center an enjoyable experience as any other in the downtown. The increased ridership has put pressure on the YTC to accommodate users. The WATS Long Range Transportation plan

has made it a regional priority to update that space or to re-locate it where necessary to be a better functioning space.

DEPOT TOWN

Depot Town grew up around the intersection of the regional and inter-urban railroads and the Huron River. Similar to downtown in the size and age of buildings as well as land use, Depot Town covers a smaller area. It is a regional draw due to the restaurants and festivals held in the adjacent parks. When train service is secured, the area is expected to have more activity from commuters on foot, bicycle and car as well more development pressure. The Ride plans a connector bus route to the stop as well. The plan, shown on the following page is a transit-oriented design to integrate the train stop and increased activity into the fabric of Depot Town.

Maintain Depot Town as a place for the pedestrian first – Ongoing

Depot Town is a safe, walkable place in Ypsilanti. A curbless street is proposed on River Street to ease access for pedestrians, including those in wheelchairs or with baby strollers. Parking lots should be away from the street front, as shown in the concept plan.

Build curbless “festival” street on River and Cross – Ongoing

A curbless street on River and Cross Streets adjacent to the train platform would increase pedestrian accessibility and facilitate events.

Create a public space at new train station – Ongoing

Improvements and an expansion of the existing Market Plaza is shown in the concept plan as part of the new train station. Public spaces allow a diversity of temporary uses to happen (festivals to farmers’ markets) and gives opportunity for people of all types to come together. The development of the train station has been delayed and alternative designs are being considered, of which there is very little space to include public space.

Figure 16: Concept TOD Plan for Depot Town



The concept plan was developed to meet community values when daily train service starts. The plan features a plaza, shown in red, which could be used for a farmers' market and other events. The Freight House is preserved. The portions of River and Cross Streets in pink is shown as a curb-less "festival" street - making crossings easier for pedestrians on a daily basis while helping the accessibility of the events in Depot Town. A small park space is proposed between River Street and the tracks. Parking is away from the street to the west of the railroad tracks. The design of access to Frog Island park will need to be coordinated with previous designs in the final plans. Drawing by: AECOM

Locate permanent year-round home for Depot Town Farmer’s Market - Completed

The market is currently located in Market Plaza of the Freight House in Depot Town. As plans are developed for the train depot, a permanent year-round location for the farmer’s market should be included in the design. The concept plan shows preservation of the Freight House and the creation of a plaza where the market could be held during the summer months.

CROSS STREET

Cross Street is the interface between the campus of Eastern Michigan University and the City. It serves as a commercial center for both Eastern Michigan students and the adjacent neighborhoods. The plan improves the function of the roads for all while integrating Cross Street with EMU. All of these projects should be pursued in conjunction with EMU and the DDA.

Separate Cross Street and Washtenaw Avenue - Ongoing As shown in the concept plan in Figure 17, Cross Street and Washtenaw Avenue can be separated and made two-way streets. The separation would improve the safety of this high-crash intersection by calming traffic, creating safer pedestrian crossings and better navigation for all modes of transportation. *This infrastructure improvement has*

been included in the Capital Improvements Plan. As stated earlier, this will be part of a phased approach where the actual separation would be last and final phase.

Create a “front door” for EMU by reconfiguration of Cross Street and Washtenaw – Ongoing

During the Design Charrette, EMU officials agreed that the campus needs an entrance and the land created by the pulling apart of the two roads could create a mixed use area with a gathering area and possibly housing. *This project requires coordination with MDOT for implementation. This is related to the aforementioned Separate Cross Street and Washtenaw Avenue plan.*

The centers host a variety of events and land uses in distinctly urban places. The DDA should use its ability to attract and assist businesses to maintain a vibrant business mix, while the City should use its policies to maintain the building form. The “Centers Implementation Matrix” shows the time frame for each action detailed in this chapter and how it meets the City’s primary guiding values of safety, diversity, and sustainability. This matrix is intended to be used by decision-makers to create reports and work plans as well as evaluate progress on an annual basis.

Figure 17: Reconfiguration of Cross & Washtenaw

The concept plan below is a scheme to separate Washtenaw Avenue and Cross Street. The proposal is to pull the two roads apart, eliminating the existing convergence and creating public and developable space, shown in green. The existing statues and the water tower will be linked with a public space that will also give refuge to pedestrians crossing the streets. A developable area will be created to the east of the water tower. Student housing and parking were discussed as possible uses with EMU. Drawing by: AECOM



Figure 18: Centers Implementation Matrix

Action	Timeframe	Location	Safety	Diversity	Equity	Environmental Sustainability	Economy
Continue and expand the number, type, and location of festivals and events	Ongoing	All centers		x			x
Continue efforts to fill upper stories	Ongoing	All centers		x	x	x	x
Maintain and expand transportation options	Ongoing	Downtown	x		x	x	x
Draft a business attraction plan for Downtown, Depot Town and Cross Street	1-5 years	All centers		x			x
Encourage business and event activity during the day and evening	1-5 years	All centers	x	x	x		x
Marketing campaign for the City of Ypsilanti	1-5 years	All centers					x
Curbless "festival" street on Washington	1-5 years	Downtown	x		x		x
Use vacant storefronts for temporary retail uses	1-5 years	Downtown	x		x		x
Permanent year-round home for Downtown Farmer's Market	1-5 years	Downtown	x	x	x	x	x
Permanent year-round home for Depot Town Farmer's Market	1-5 years	Depot Town	x	x	x	x	x
Increase walkability (2-way streets & raised intersections)	1-10 years	Downtown	x		x		x
Curbless "festival" street on River and Cross	1-10 years	Depot Town	x		x		x
Create a public space at new train station	1-10 years	Depot Town	x		x		x
Separate Cross and Washtenaw	1-10 years	Cross Street	x			x	x
Create a "front door" for EMU with reconfiguration of Cross and Washtenaw	1-10 years	Cross Street	x	x			x

Chapter 7 – Neighborhoods

“Charming neighborhoods” – Sticky note on what to preserve, submitted during the Discover Charrette

Ypsilanti has a wide variety of neighborhoods, some built over a century ago and others just decades old. The residents, streets, and architecture create distinct communities with the 4.3 square miles of Ypsilanti. However, when looking at public comment and data on the age, size, and types of housing, the neighborhoods fell into two framework categories: Central Neighborhoods and Outlying Neighborhoods, as shown on Map 14.

PAST POLICIES

The City of Ypsilanti’s housing policy efforts have been in response to the following themes:

- The sizable population of college students and lower income families, along with large supply of multi-family housing, has meant that nearly 2/3 of households rent their homes.
- The large share of pre-war and mid-century structures with energy-efficiency difficulty creates challenges while also drawing residents to historic neighborhoods.
- The “landlocked” and nearly built-out city has lacked the vacant land to participate in the construction of new housing seen in surrounding municipalities.

In 1978, the City created a Historic District and in 1983 began rental housing inspections. These two programs are generally considered to have been successful in stabilizing and maintaining the city’s housing stock and neighborhoods. In 2003, the City enacted a dangerous buildings ordinance that provided an additional tool for addressing the worst nuisance properties and stabilizing surrounding neighborhoods.

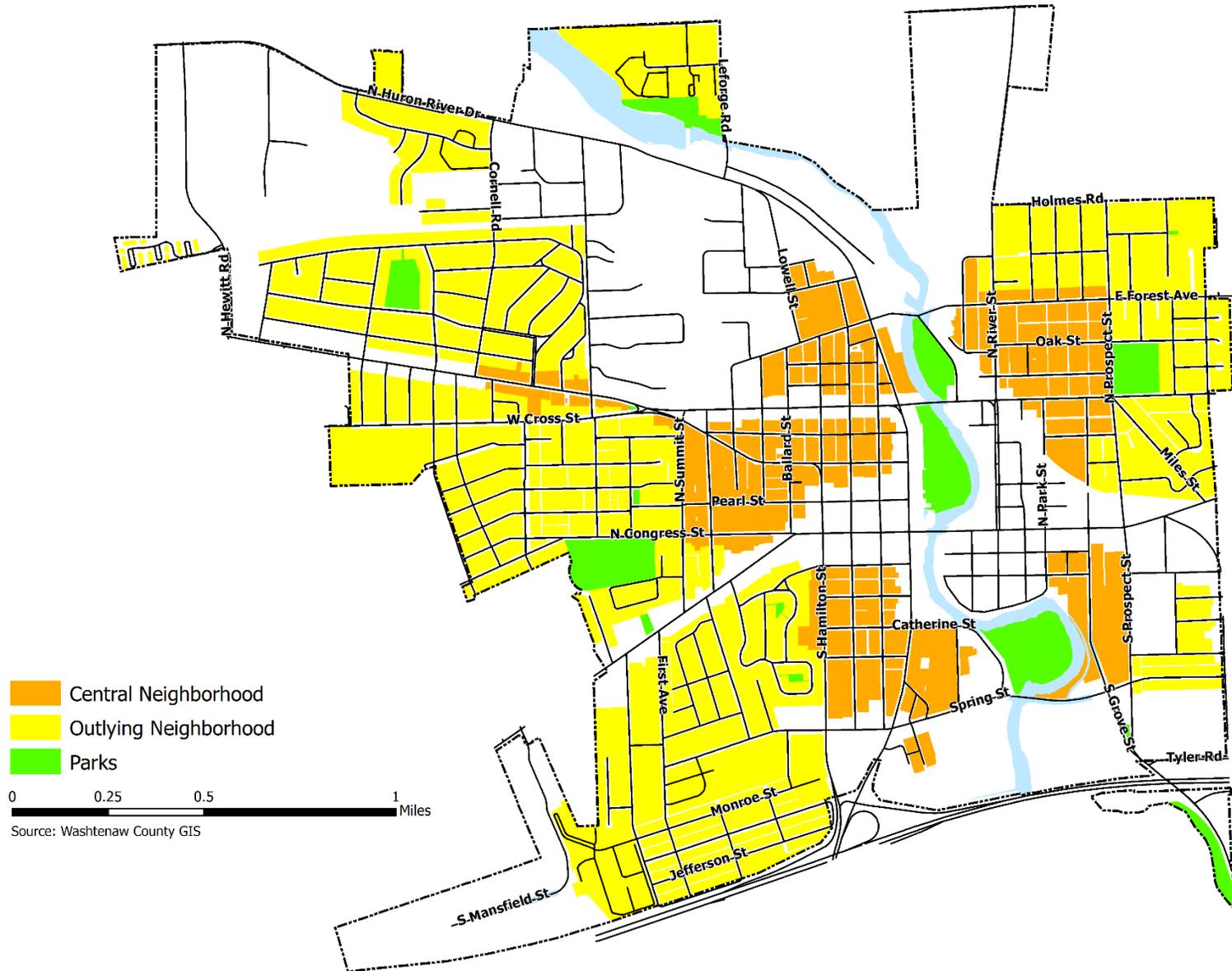
The City began implementation in 2009, when foreclosure activity led to fears of increasing numbers of abandoned buildings, but at that time quickly proved effective in spurring removal or rehabilitation of long-vacant buildings.

The City has also “down zoned” residential areas in an effort to encourage home ownership, most successfully in the Historic Eastside. The most recent occurrence

was in 2006 when around 800 residential parcels in the Cross Street neighborhood were rezoned to reduce maximum permitted density, as laid out in the 2001 Cross Street Neighborhood Improvement Plan. This effort had mixed success since the fall of the housing market in the mid-2000s resulted in lower prices for housing and the high conversion costs to single-family or a smaller number of units were not financially viable in that market.

The previous zoning ordinance defined a range of different multiple-family living uses – rooming house, fraternity, etc. – each with different regulations drafted for those uses at the time of their inclusion in the zoning. The result was confusing regulations that were not flexible for innovations. The updated zoning ordinance and definitions provide better clarity.

Map 14: Neighborhoods City Framework Map



PUBLIC INPUT

In every focus group at the beginning of the 2013 Master Plan process, participants felt the City of Ypsilanti should have housing for people of all ages, races, incomes and abilities in the City as a guiding value. Residents across the City expressed pride in their neighborhoods.

Tension about the location of rental housing – whether townhouses, multiple-family dwellings or large houses converted multiple dwelling units emerged during the charrettes and implementation focus groups. Many participants expressed concerns about rental housing, particularly EMU student housing, expanding into neighborhoods and degrading its value. Others saw the need for student housing in a college town. As EMUs enrollment declines or shifts towards online classes, there could be opportunity to convert unused dorm rooms into units open to residents besides students. Meanwhile, some residents expressed the need for housing with little maintenance, such as a condominium or a rental, but suitable for seniors or young professionals. Ypsilanti lacks this type of housing, often considered as the “missing middle.”

In 2019, residents expressed a desire for “complete neighborhoods” in the community-wide survey. In fact, 68% said that the completeness of the neighborhood was the deciding factor in where they choose to live. The definition of completeness was up to them to decide through the multiple choice question; their results show that in addition to residential uses, residents want their neighborhoods to have recreation space, sidewalks, public transit options, community gardens/trees, and daily need good and services.

DATA

As shown in Chapter 3, the neighborhoods have distinct patterns in terms of age, size, number of units and homeownership/rental status. Closer to the Historic Downtown and EMU’s southern border are clustered large houses built before World War II with a variety of numbers of dwelling units and a mix of owner-occupied units and rentals. Neighborhoods nearer to the borders of the City were built in the later part of the twentieth century and are either single-family houses or multiple-family buildings. With the exception of the Heritage Park area, the majority of the single-family houses are owner-occupied. Multiple-family is almost exclusively rental, except for condominiums built near EMU’s western

Shape Ypsilanti Master Plan (DRAFT UPDATE) – July 15, 2020

border and along Washtenaw near EMU and the Historic Downtown. However, overall, most single-family dwellings are owner-occupied.

In the central neighborhoods, the Historic Eastside has a higher percentage of homeownership and a unique lot mix with many deep lots. Due to the down-zoning decades ago, this neighborhood has a higher rate of homeownership than other neighborhoods built around the same time. The Historic South Side neighborhoods have a range of building types - with some apartment buildings but mostly four units or less - and standard sized lots. The Midtown and Riverside neighborhoods have the widest variety of building types - from cottages to large apartment houses along with other group living arrangements, as well as a large range of lot sizes.

Despite the distinct differences, over two-thirds of the housing units in Ypsilanti are rented. Other college towns have a similar housing mix, including Ann Arbor where 55% of the housing units are rented. Renters are integral members of the community; planning for renters and access to affordable housing shall be continued.

POLICY AND PLANS FOR ALL NEIGHBORHOODS

The following actions apply to all neighborhoods:

Continue and increase rental inspections and enforcement- *Ongoing*

Rental inspection and enforcement of code violations are vital to maintaining safe rental housing. City budget dedicated to rental inspection and enforcement should be maintained, if not increased.

Streamline multiple-family living arrangements into categories based on number of units and form - *Completed*

Living arrangements for multiple-family situations should be collapsed in the form-based code into building forms – duplexes, estate houses, townhouses, and apartment buildings – with categories of number of units matching those in the State Building Code – 2-units, 2-4 units and 5 or more units. Group living arrangements, such as rooming houses and fraternities, will continue to be allowed in estate houses but with regulations for that general use, not tailored for each

instance. [The City updated its zoning ordinance to reflect these living arrangements.](#)

Assist continuation and expansion of EMU Live Ypsi program - *Ongoing*
Eastern Michigan University, with staff assistance from the City and Washtenaw County, offers a forgivable loan program for faculty and staff purchasing a home in the City of Ypsilanti. The City will continue its support of this program.

Plan and zone for range of housing typologies for the needs of all ages and abilities- *Ongoing*

Due to demographic shifts, several neighborhoods have increasing numbers of senior citizens, who may or may not choose to stay in their homes. Similarly, young professionals and families are looking for homes integrated into the community. Neighborhoods should be planned to provide a diversity of housing types within neighborhoods for all stages of life. [The City has used its ordinance to expand housing types permitted in residential zones, but it may be appropriate to further expand housing types, such as accessory dwelling units.](#)

Create “Eco-Districts” in neighborhood parks - *Ongoing*

Residents suggested that demonstration projects of community gardens with hoop houses, rain collection systems, and renewable energy projects be clustered in eco-districts in neighborhood parks, in the Historic Downtown, and other areas.

Temporary events were also suggested in these areas. An existing example of a demonstration project is the Luna Lake rain garden in Prospect Park. While the City cannot take on development of these districts, partnerships with educational institutions and neighborhood groups may provide resources to establish them.

[The City has permitted these uses within parks and other zones and welcomes opportunities that follow these guidelines:](#)

- The proposal be in the proper location of the park to complement existing activities, both active (sports areas and playgrounds) and passive (walking or sitting areas)
- The proposal should be located in an area with appropriate lighting and visibility to assure safety of users and enough natural surveillance to be kept watch over by neighbors.
- Proposals should be part of an adopt-a-park effort
- Policies will need to be developed to ensure maintenance, both short and long term.

Continue Home-Based Entrepreneurship - *Completed*

The City encourages home-based businesses through clear regulation. The updated zoning allow businesses within homes using the current regulatory scheme for uses.

Regulate the form of buildings to preserve the character of neighborhoods - *Completed*

Using the building types existing within the neighborhoods, the zoning regulations should preserve the architectural patterns. [The zoning ordinance was updated to include Building Types.](#)

Re-survey of the Historic District – *Ongoing*

[The Ypsilanti Historic District designation was completed in 1978 and 1983. The current listing documents are not sufficient for addressing common issues with the historic resources, including identification of contributing and non-contributing resources; areas and periods of significance; and clear boundaries. The district should be resurveyed and a new Historic District Study Committee formed to update the district. A new study committee report would greatly aid property owners, staff, and the commission with making the best decisions for the preservation of Ypsilanti’s most historic resources. Additionally, it would clear up confusion with the outdated boundary map, as some boundary lines currently bisect parcels, and includes part of the Water Street development area, where all of the historic resources have been removed.](#)

Consider new opportunities for accessory dwelling units – *Ongoing*

[The City engaged with residents during a January 2020 meeting. While findings varied, accessory dwelling units appear to be embraced by a number of community residents. It was inferred from this meeting that residents want accessory dwelling units to be permissible uses in a greater number of zoning districts, but with protections to secure harmony with the neighborhood. The following regulations might be considered to keep this harmony: size and height, ratio to principal structure and green space, and parking. Future community meetings may guide further action. The City shall first explore these opportunities in Central Neighborhood-based zoning districts and may consider expanding to Outlying Neighborhoods if the appropriate regulations are put in place.](#)

CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOODS

These neighborhoods are some of the oldest in Ypsilanti. Initially oriented on the Huron River, they are built on a grid street network connected to the adjacent business districts. They border downtown, Depot Town, and EMU. These neighborhoods have a range of residential building types, with churches, schools, stores, and gas stations intermixed. Around the railroad, industrial uses are mixed into the neighborhood.

The following policies and actions aim to preserve the form of these neighborhoods while enabling the sustainability of all the buildings:

Preserve the character of the area by using regulations on street type, building type as well as use - Completed

Elements of form-based code were developed based on existing streets, lot sizes, building types, and uses to preserve the context of each area. The goal was to eliminate regulations that need exceptions to preserve existing context by creating rules based on the context. In addition to the zoning updates, engineering standards were updated.

Regulations of the variety of housing types, uses, and lot sizes will be calibrated to the existing patterns – Completed

Central neighborhoods do not all look alike so the regulations reflect the differences with appropriate gradations in the variety of uses and building types based on existing patterns. Three core neighborhood zones were created: Core-neighborhood single-family, core-neighborhood mid, and core-neighborhood with the main difference being the varying levels of housing density permitted.

Preserve Bell-Kramer residential land uses – Ongoing

The Bell-Kramer neighborhood, located near the southeastern corner of S. Huron St. and Spring St. underwent planning changes from 2013 to 2018. The neighborhood was identified as a District in the City Framework and was zoned mostly PMD due to its proximity to the former landfill to the south. However, City testing for contaminants came back safer than previously understood. The City engaged in meetings with the residents and heard their wishes to keep the neighborhood residential. Consequently, in 2018 the City rezoned the neighborhood back to residential, to CN-Mid. This zoning designation better

stabilizes the residential land uses of the neighborhood. In hope to better protect the health of the residents, the City also updated a well-restriction ordinance which prohibits the drilling and use of wells in the neighborhood. It is recommended the Bell-Kramer neighborhood keep its residential character. The City Framework was updated to reflect this change from *District* to *Central Neighborhood*.

OUTLYING NEIGHBORHOODS

These neighborhoods, constructed during or after World War II, are almost exclusively residential uses, with single-family and multiple-family uses separated. Single-family residences are usually smaller than those in the central neighborhoods. The zoning changes below are designed to stabilize these neighborhoods:

Limit uses to predominantly single-family residential uses in areas with small houses, suited for only single-family-Completed

Several neighborhoods - Heritage Park, Worden Garden, Prospect Gardens, Miles neighborhoods and the houses on River Street from Holmes to the north to Cherry – were formerly zoned for two-family residential use. Because very few structures are two-family nor have the floor area to accommodate two dwelling units, these neighborhoods were limited to single-family uses when the zoning ordinance was updated. These neighborhoods may have potential for accessory dwelling units, based on where there is existing infrastructure. Future community meetings may guide proper action.

The matrix in figure 19 shows the time frame for each item and if it meets the goals of safety, diversity, and sustainability. It, in conjunction with the other matrices, should be used by decision-makers to create reports and work plans as well as evaluate progress on an annual basis.

Figure 19: Neighborhoods Implementation Matrix

Action	Timeframe	Location	Safety	Diversity	Equity	Environmental Sustainability	Economy
Continue and increase rental inspections and enforcement	Ongoing	All neighborhoods	x		x	x	x
Assist continuation and expansion of EMU Live Ypsi program	Ongoing	All neighborhoods		x			x
Regulate the form of buildings to preserve the character of neighborhoods	Ongoing	All neighborhoods		x	x		x
Create "Eco-Districts" in neighborhood parks	1-10 years	All neighborhoods		x		x	
Re-survey of the Historic District	1-10 years	All neighborhoods			x	x	
Consider new opportunities for accessory dwelling units	1-10 years	All neighborhoods		x	x	x	x
Preserve Bell-Kramer residential land uses	Ongoing	Central neighborhoods	x		x	x	

Chapter 8 - Corridors

“They should connect cities, not be primary destinations.”- Comment on main roads, like Washtenaw, submitted on the website, shapeypsi.com

There are two types of corridors located in Ypsilanti. One is a general corridor which contains a variety of medium to smaller parcels and is adjacent to both types of neighborhoods, such as College Heights and Midtown. General corridors are home to predominantly commercial establishments, restaurants, offices, and other businesses that are geared toward automobile traffic. The land pattern is typically linear and provides predominately commercial and office uses that are adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Usually a physical barrier is created to “protect” one use from another by way of a wall or heavy landscaping.

The second type is a historic corridor, which differs slightly from the general corridor in scale and building type. The historic corridors are characterized by smaller commercial establishments and offices mixed with large historic structures (such as historic homes that are now being used for a variety of purposes). Historic corridors generally have a more seamless integration with the surrounding neighborhoods.

PAST POLICIES

The current zoning ordinance regulates the use of the land primarily, linking a certain number of related land uses to individual parcels of land. In corridors, these zoning districts have laid out in strips, usually commercial but also office, civic, and multiple- and single -family. The resulting zoning maps are a patchwork of districts down the corridors. However, the uses cannot freely flow down the corridors due to the use classifications. Rezoning is often required.

In general corridors, the landscaping regulations required by the zoning districts and overlays are suburban in nature. The entry-way overlay on all general corridors at the borders of the City requires a 10-foot greenbelt around the entire parcel. Since these lots are generally smaller than suburban counterparts, the required setbacks and landscaping either do not fit on the parcels when redeveloped or limit the building size to a footprint only compatible with uses needing a small square footage. The result has been vacant or underutilized buildings along the general corridors or approvals that waive requirements. The current zoning does not encourage improvements due the complexity of applying the standards.

The regulations of the Historic District have maintained the integrity of the buildings along the historic corridors. The high speeds of the one-way streets on the historic corridors of Cross, Huron and Hamilton, however, make the street itself a hostile environment, lessening the value of some the buildings.

PUBLIC INPUT

During the charrettes, participants often spoke about the difficulties of walking or cycling in the corridors of the City. They also expressed disappointment about the number of vacant or underutilized stores.

POLICY AND PLANS FOR ALL CORRIDORS

The following items apply to all types of corridors:

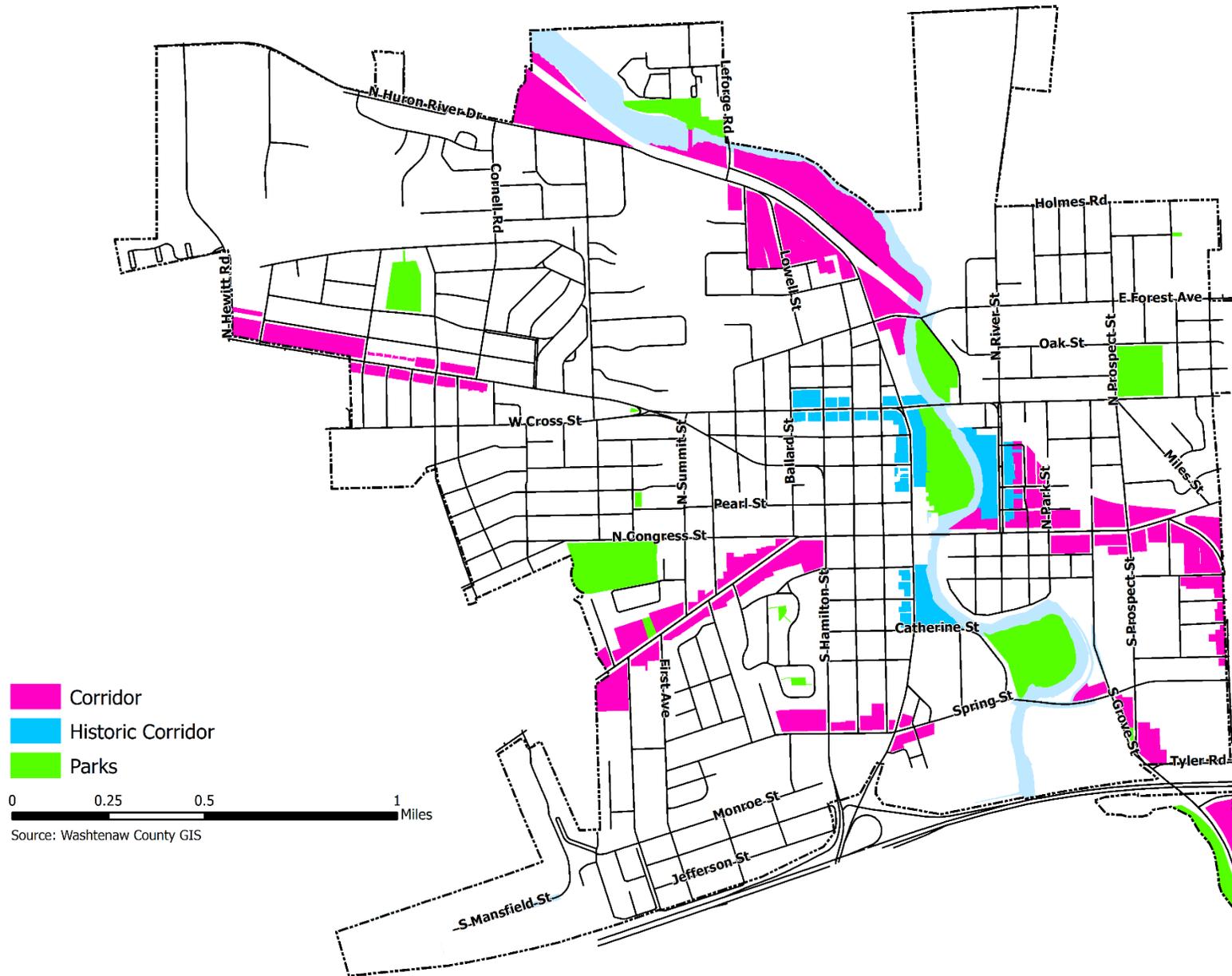
Designate the appropriate building form for each corridor- *Completed*

The form-based code will designate types of buildings to match the existing patterns within the corridor and, if applicable, the change envisioned by the community for that area. [The zoning ordinance was updated to include building types in “Walkable Urban Districts.”](#)

Retain the mix of existing uses within each corridor but allow them throughout the corridor - *Completed*

The form-based code would allow all the current uses within a corridor area to remain, but also to be anywhere throughout that area. For instance, a vacant lot now zoned commercial instead would be zoned general or historic corridor and all of uses, such as multiple-family, commercial or office within that segment of the street happen without a rezoning.

Map 15: Corridors City Framework Map



HISTORIC CORRIDORS

Historic corridors are located along Cross Street, Huron Street, Hamilton Street, and River Street. The following actions will help to preserve and enhance the vitality of these areas:

Reinforce preservation of historic buildings- *Completed*

The form-based code will require the elements of the historic buildings along these corridors be incorporated into any new development or rebuilding.

Restore two-way function to Historic Corridors- *Ongoing*

As outlined in the transportation chapter of this plan, two-way function of these streets will increase safety and make navigation by foot, bicycle, bus or car easier.

Maintain River Street as a historic boulevard - *Ongoing*

River Street between Cross Street and Michigan Avenue is a boulevard lined by historic buildings with a variety of uses. The form-based code should attune design standards for this corridor to the street form of a boulevard.

GENERAL CORRIDORS

General corridors are designated along Washtenaw Ave and Cross Streets, East Michigan Avenue and Ecorse, Huron River Drive, Leforge and Railroad Street, Harriet Street, Lincoln and West Michigan Avenue.

Coordinate Washtenaw Avenue with the Re-Imagine Washtenaw Plan

Ongoing

The City has been an important partner in the Reimagine Washtenaw coalition. While larger redevelopment sites are available in areas outside the City, many of the place-making, transit-oriented, and mixed-use development concepts can be employed on the smaller City lots. Diverse land uses are contemplated for the corridor, but additional land designated for commercial land uses is not envisioned. Rather, as sites are redeveloped, particularly in retail nodes at Hewitt, Mansfield/Cornell, and Cross Street, special emphasis should be placed on incorporating walkable and mixed-use elements in the site redesign.

The form-based code in the node areas will look to have redevelopment move closer to the street, provide improved pedestrian access and generally orient more to the pedestrian than to the vehicle.

Require a pedestrian-friendly building form while allowing a mix of uses for both students and residents along Huron River Drive, Leforge & Railroad corridors – *Ongoing*

These corridors are borders with the EMU campus that currently divide it from it the City due to the width of the roads and barriers of the Huron River and railroad tracks. In the form-based code, the regulations should be changed to create a walkable environment with appropriate uses that integrates the City and the EMU campus. A design process for this area should be part of the 5-year update to this plan.

Restore Harriet Street as the Main Street of adjacent neighborhoods – *Ongoing*

The same mixture of uses would be allowed along Harriet, from Hamilton to Perry, but the urban form on the north side of the road would be required for any redevelopment of the south side. In order to create a walkable environment, the number of lanes for vehicles would be decreased to two lanes, creating room for on-street parking, bicycle lanes and pedestrian areas. The reconfiguration of the road would most likely on be possible when Huron and Hamilton are converted to two-way.

The matrix details the phasing of the plans and policies discussed above and how they meet the City's goals of safety, diversity and sustainability. With other matrices, it should be used to create reports and work plans as well as evaluate progress on an annual basis.

Figure 20: Corridors Implementation Matrix

Action	Timeframe	Location	Safety	Diversity	Equity	Environmental Sustainability	Economy
Designate the appropriate building form for each corridor based on existing patterns and vision for that corridor	Form-based code	All corridors	x	x	x		x
Retain the mix of uses within each corridor but allow them throughout the area	Form-based code	All corridors		x	x		x
Reinforce preservation of historic buildings	Form-based code	Historic corridors		x			x
Maintain River Street as a historic boulevard	Form-based code	Historic corridors	x	x			x
Require a pedestrian friendly building form while allowing a mix of uses for both students and residents along Huron River Drive, Leforge & Railroad corridors	Form-based code	General corridors	x	x	x		x
Coordinate regulations for Washtenaw Avenue with the Washtenaw County Re-Imagine Washtenaw Plan	1-10 years	General corridors	x	x	x		x
Restore Harriet Street as the Main Street of adjacent neighborhoods	1-10 years	General corridors	x	x	x		x
Restore two-way function to Cross, Huron, and Hamilton Streets	1-10 years	Historic corridors	x		x	x	x

Chapter 9 – Districts

“*Stable, diverse local economy*”- Sticky note on what to create, from the Discover Charrette

Districts accommodate major economic development, employment centers or universities or unique entities, like the cemetery. The range of districts within Ypsilanti includes Eastern Michigan University, the social service and medical offices clustered on Towner and several industrial areas which provide employment and stability to the community.

PAST POLICIES

The City has established partnerships with the anchors of each of these districts. The City, DDA and EMU work together through the Community Engaged Council. The City is open to regularly meeting with the owners of the industrial properties in the southern part of the City. Zoning policies have been consistent for these areas and are less to blame for any vacancy than the recent economic downturn, a legacy of environmental contamination, and the shift away from a manufacturing economy.

PUBLIC INPUT

Participants views of the districts varied for each area. Very little was said about Highland Cemetery during the process. Much was said about Eastern Michigan University and the need for better town-gown relationships. A true symbiotic relationship between the City and the University was seen as key. The office, social service, and medical buildings on Towner in the eastern part of the City were not mentioned during the process, even by heads of social service agencies in focus groups.

Almost all participants felt new jobs within the City for current City residents of all education levels were imperative. They felt large job centers should be located in southern industrial areas or “jobs districts”. Overall, the vision articulated was that jobs and industry are needed for the economic and equitable sustainability of the City.

DATA

Since the last Master Plan in 1998, the City of Ypsilanti has experienced a fundamental shift in its local economy. The manufacturing base that once sustained the City is almost entirely gone. It has lost close to 1,600 manufacturing jobs since 2001. The largest tax payers are now apartment property owners, instead of manufacturing facilities.

Eastern Michigan University remains an economic driver in the City, as one of the largest employers.

The industrial park in the southwest corner of the City has been mostly built out. Meanwhile larger facilities, like the Angstrom property, have been difficult to re-commission.

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Due to state law, the City has no jurisdiction over the built environment within EMU’s campus. However, a guiding value for the City is Ypsilanti is an asset for EMU and vice versa. The City can continue to work with the University to create integrated functions between the City and Eastern, as well as programmatic steps:

Update regulations to create walkable areas at the border of the City and Campus - Completed

The form-based code should require walkable streets with building forms that complement the campus of EMU at the borders of campus. Further details on proposals for Leforge, Railroad and Huron River Drive are in the chapter on corridors.

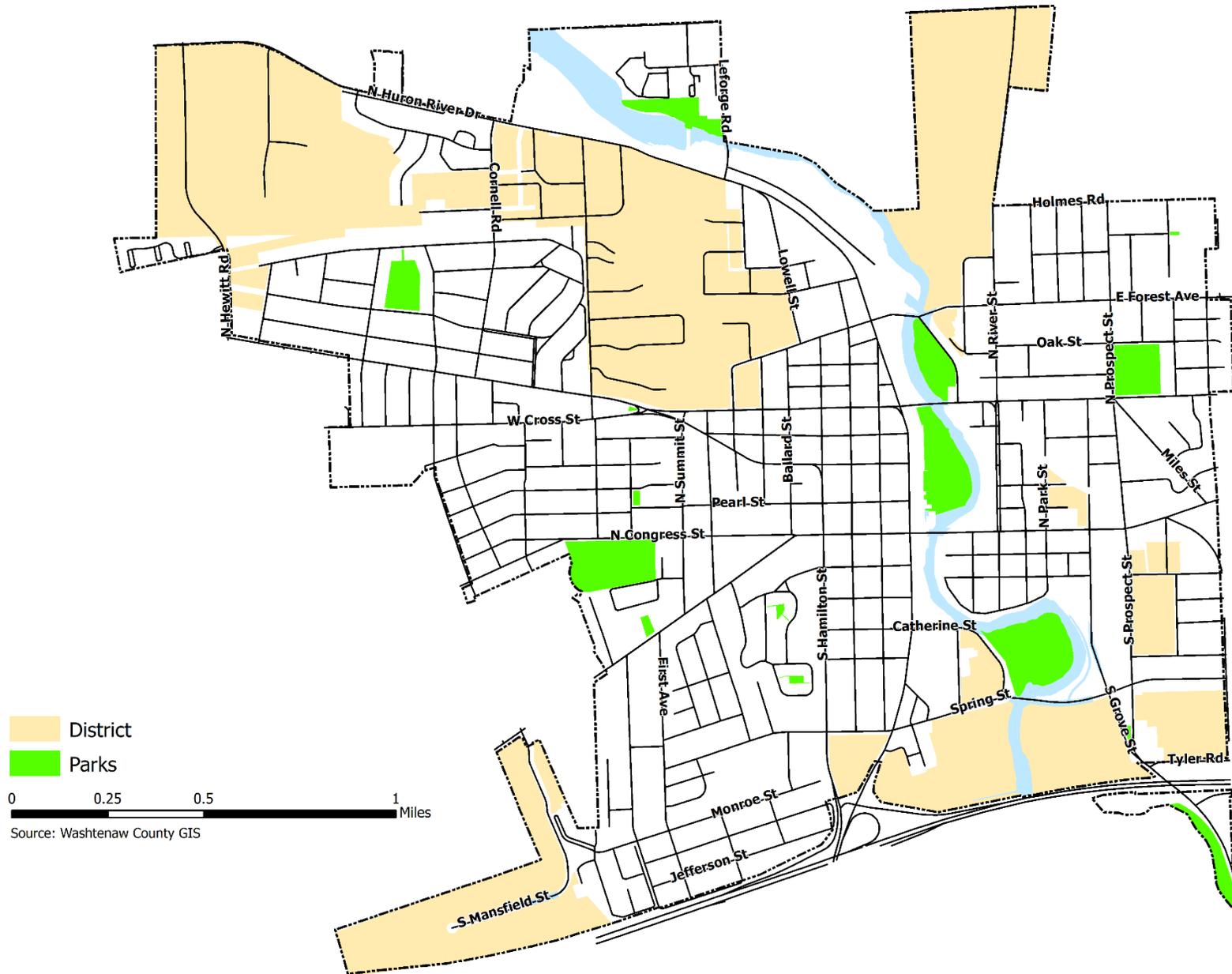
Create a “front door” for EMU with the reconfiguration of Cross Street and Washtenaw - Ongoing

As discussed in the chapter on Centers, the confluence of Cross Street and Washtenaw should be eliminated by pulling the two roads apart, creating a mixed use area with a gathering area and possibly housing. The pedestrian mix and form should create a coordinated street scape between campus and city borders, both here and in the Huron River Drive corridor discussed in Chapter 8.

Create “Welcome to Ypsilanti” packages for new EMU students, including a web version - Not started

The City should bring together EMU administration and the Visitors and Convention Bureau to create welcome packages for all new students.

Map 16: Districts City Framework Map



HUMAN AND HEALTH SERVICES DISTRICT

The area on either side of Towner between Prospect and Arnet Streets is home to the Washtenaw County Service Center to the north and medical facilities to the south. Both provide services for the City and the County. The facilities' layouts are suburban in form. The following policies or actions should be taken in this district:

Create regulations that support the existing building form but assure access by all modes of transportation - Completed

The service center and medical facilities are suburban style buildings but are accessed by car, transit, bicycle and pedestrians. The form-based code should support the current style of building but require pathways, parking and loading facilities for all types of transportation.

Encourage use or redevelopment of unused parking lots - Completed

The parking lot for the medical facility is often empty. The city should work with the owners of the facility to see if a temporary use is possible to bring more activity. If redevelopment occurs, the existing street grid should be reconnected and a more urban form required. [Health and Human Services zoning district was updated under the Walkable Urban District umbrella, with hope that future development will then be building-type based with less of a suburban style.](#)

JOB DISTRICTS IN SOUTHERN PART OF CITY

The industrial park, large Angstrom property and other assorted industrial properties in the southern part of the City are well-suited for facilities that require easy highway access and roadways for trucks. These districts should be called "job districts" where the following plans or policies should occur:

Allow renewable energy facilities, such as solar panels - Completed

Most participants in the implementation focus groups felt that renewable energy facilities should be allowed as part of development in Job Districts, but not displace the possibility of new facilities being built. During the process of rewriting the zoning ordinance, the City could explore whether large-scale renewable energy facilities could be allowed as the primary use as long as they would be incorporated into later development. These types of facilities would be in line with the City's guiding values of Ypsilanti being sustainable and a great place to do business, especially the green and creative.

Reduce minimum lot size and width in the industrial park - Completed

The industrial park was laid out in a suburban style with large lots. The two smallest lots along Mansfield are approximately 125 feet wide. If that were to be made the new minimum lot width, approximately 10 new, developable industrial

lots could be created by splitting off undeveloped land from existing parcels, subtracting area along streams and wetlands. The minimum lot area could be established at 60,000 square foot, which is the approximate area of the smallest existing parcel. Property owners would decide whether to split and sell land. The potential addition of a non-motorized path connecting the residential areas to the east of the industrial park should be considered as part of future development and/or the 5-year plan update. Additional jobs and industry is vital to the City's fiscal sustainability.

Encourage development of vacant parking areas - Ongoing

The City should work with the owners of the Angstrom property to bring development to the large parking lot associated with their facility that is no longer needed. A concept plan for the site is in the following chapter. Again, jobs and industry are needed for the economic and equitable sustainability of the City. [Because of its location in the floodway, physical development may be challenging. Using the site to conduct flooding analysis may be an efficient temporary use here.](#)

RAILROAD AREA SOUTHEAST OF DEPOT TOWN

The area along the railroad, to the southeast of Depot Town, has long-standing businesses in the community. However, these uses are often at odds with the adjoining residential uses. The areas shown as district should be allowed to transition from neighborhoods to job areas, when owners petition for approvals. The corridor area to the west on Lincoln will have a mixture of less intensive uses in an urban form to act as transition between this area and the historic neighborhoods and centers nearby.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

In this effort, the City has identified the following emerging sectors as industries aligned with its Guiding Values and the needs of its residents: small manufacturing and craft production, creative economy, renewable energy, and food. Economic incentives, such as tax abatements, should be used to continue the growth of these sectors.

HIGHLAND CEMETERY

A historic part of Ypsilanti, the cemetery should be preserved and current policies left in place. [The City and Historic District Commission supported an effort to list the cemetery in the National Register of Historic Places. The Commission approved the nomination in 2019 and the cemetery was officially designated in 2020. The City continues to support preservation of the historic cemetery, working with the nonprofit organization who owns and operates it.](#)

The matrix at the end of this chapter shows how each of the proposals above enhances safety, diversity and sustainability in the City, as well as phasing. This matrix, those at the end of the previous chapters and the implementation matrix in the appendix are intended to be used by decision-makers to create reports and work plans as well as evaluate progress on an annual basis

Action	Timeframe	Location	Safety	Diversity	Equity	Environmental Sustainability	Economy
Update regulations to create walkable areas at the border of the City and Campus	Form-based code	EMU	x	x	x		x
Create regulations that support the existing building form but assure access by all modes of transportation	Form-based code	Health & Human Services	x	x	x	x	
Allow renewable energy facilities, such as solar panels, on industrial land	Form-based code	Job Districts				x	x
Reduce minimum lot size and width in the industrial park to create more opportunity	Form-based code	Job Districts		x			x
Align economic development incentives and programs to encourage emerging sectors that align with the Guiding Values and the employment potential of residents	1-5 years	All Districts					
Create "Welcome to Ypsilanti" packages for new EMU students, including web version	1-5 years	EMU		x	x		x
Encourage use or redevelopment of unused parking lots	1-5 years	Health & Human Services & Job Districts		x		x	x
Create a "front door" for EMU in the area created by the reconfiguration of Cross Street and Washtenaw Ave.	1-10 years	EMU	x	x		x	x

Chapter 10 – Redevelopment Areas

“Space not being utilized” - Sticky note on what to change, submitted during the Discover Charrette

Ypsilanti has three former industrial sites which could be redeveloped in the next 20 years. Each area is discussed in detail below and design concepts for the three sites are shown in this chapter. These drawings are concepts only, which mean they will not be duplicated detail by detail exactly as presented. All of the sites hold the promise of additional tax revenue, jobs and residents, as well as the challenges of environmental contamination and competing in a depressed regional market.

WATER STREET

Beginning around 1980, the City looked to this area of former and underutilized industrial land as a target for redevelopment. At that time, the City had little to no vacant developable land. Between 1998 and 2001, the 38-acre area was targeted for redevelopment as an urban neighborhood with a variety of housing types, particularly for sale condominiums, increasing both the new-construction housing options available and the number of owner-occupied households in the City. While the City acquired the land and completed most of the demolition and brownfield remediation necessary over the years, the intended development failed to occur. The land – and its accompanying \$31 million debt – remains a major fiscal challenge.

Two developers had options on the land and were intending to purchase the entire site and develop it. For different financial reasons, both developers pulled out of agreements. In 2008, the City decided that looking for a master developer, one entity that would take on the entire site, was no longer feasible due to the national economic downturn. Rather, it would sell smaller pieces of the parcel to interested parties as they came forward.

Three different proposals have been put to the City Council since that time. One, for a drive-through restaurant, was rejected. Another, for a County Recreation Center, was tentatively accepted through a Letter of Intent. The third, for a discount retailer, was accepted after several rounds of negotiations.

Although each had a different result, each proposal was closely followed in the press and generated much public comment. During the charrettes for this Master

Plan, many people expressed a range of visions for the property – from a permaculture forest to mixed-use mid-rise development. Almost everyone also expressed the urgency to use the property soon.

Given this political climate, the City Council will face a challenge with any development proposal that comes before them for Water Street. The Water Street redevelopment concept plan shown on the opposite page was developed based on community input during the charrettes held for this process in the Spring of 2013. The plan shows items consistently requested by the community: a formal community gathering space and a linear park along the riverfront.

The concept plan includes two structures not in previous plans for Water Street. The first is a stormwater facility in the floodplain to service the entire site, in keeping with the community’s values of creating an urban space but using environmental systems. As portions of the site are sold, the storm water facility will need to be built, some portions ahead of the actual development. Second, a vehicular bridge extending River Street across the Huron River and south to Factory Street is shown. The extension of River Street would complete a missing portion of the street grid, giving the neighborhoods near Spring and Factory Street easier access to the resources in the downtown and would create an easy traffic route from the highway to Water Street. The bridge and street extension are long term projects, perhaps ten to twenty years in future.

Figure 22: Water Street Concept Plan



The drawing to the left is based on community input during the charrettes and urban design principles. It is a 20-year vision for the Water Street area. When developed, the site may differ from this exact layout.

The street layout is a continuation of the existing street system, drawing the value of the river through the community. A vehicular bridge is proposed extending River Street to Factory. A stormwater facility for the entire site is shown just north of the river.

The plan includes a formal park, ringed in red, and a linear park along the Huron. The property south of the river is shown as recreation use. This area is mostly floodplain. The building shown south of the river is a concept footprint that would need further study. Drawing by: AECOM

Approval Process and Standards

The concept plan is based upon common urban design standards which will be incorporated into the form-based code for the City. These are the standards by which the City Council should determine whether the City should sell a portion of Water Street for a proposed development. The standards do not talk about the use. Rather, they dictate the design of the street, what is on the street and the design of the buildings for multiple uses over the long-term. If and only if all of these standards are met, should the City Council consider sale of property on Water Street:

Respect right-of-ways & blocks

The street layout should connect to existing streets – River, Lincoln and Park across Michigan Avenue to the north, as well as Parsons and South to the east. The new streets should continue the same width and design. Also, the blocks, as laid out in the sketch, pull the value of the view of Huron River through the entire site to the rest of city, by ending streets into parkland along the river’s edge. All proposed development should abide by this general layout.

Block perimeter should be less than 1,200 feet, like the other blocks in the City

Every block in Water Street, the area of land bounded on four sides by streets, should be less than 1,200 feet in perimeter. Blocks larger than this length, the average block perimeter in the adjacent Historic Downtown, will cut off access and value from the site to the rest of the City.

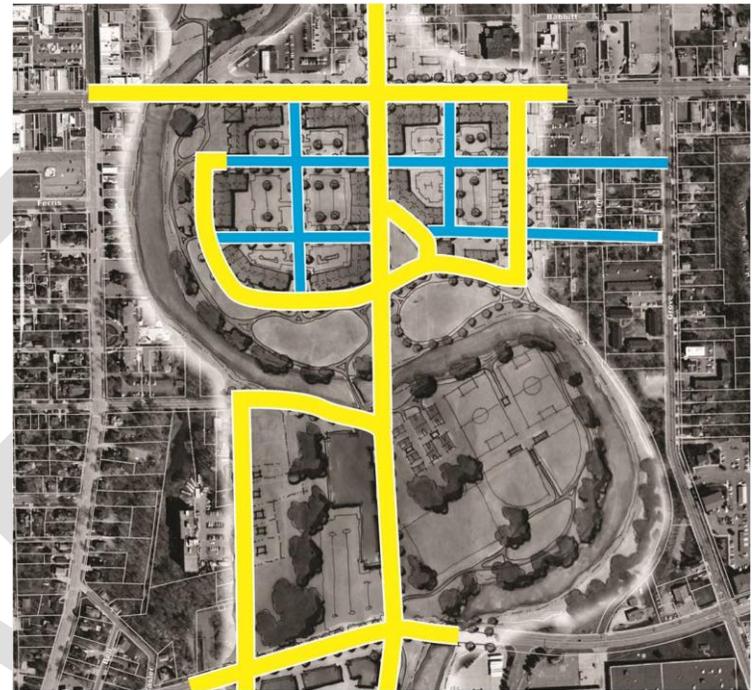
All streets have on-street parking

Parallel parking should be required on all streets and count towards any zoning parking requirements. The on-street parking slows traffic, makes a walkable environment and provides parking in front of buildings.

All streets have sidewalks

To assure a walkable space, all streets must have sidewalks on both sides, including the side of the street nearest to the park fronting the Huron River.

Figure 23: Water Street “A” and “B” Streets



“A” Streets are shown in yellow and “B” streets in blue

All streets have space for trees and other stuff

New streets in the Water Street area should have designated areas for trees between the road edge and the sidewalk, while street furniture – benches, trash receptacles and outdoor seating – should be placed in the same place along the sidewalk. The photograph on the opposite page shows an example zones for trees, outdoor seating and pedestrians in Depot Town.

All driveway aprons have the same design

Driveway aprons, the portion of the curb cut that slopes down to meet the street, should be consistent throughout the development. Moreover, they should be made of different materials than the sidewalk to show where vehicles enter and exit to pedestrians, as shown in the photograph on the opposite page. They should also be gradually sloped for ease of pedestrian crossing.

All buildings are built for multiple uses over time

All building should be built for eventual re-use, specifically through regulation of the height of floor. The ground floor, from floor to ceiling should be a minimum of 12 feet with a maximum of 14 feet. Upper floors should be 10 feet.

New development has “A” & “B” streets, similar to the Historic Downtown (see Figure 23)

Buildings which front “A” streets must have parking on the street and behind the building. “A” street design, with no curb cuts, is required on Michigan Avenue, River Street as it is continued through the site and Park Street as well as the street fronting the park adjacent to the Huron River. The “A” street design must incorporate the elements and dimensions of the cross section on this page (see figure 26).

“B” streets (see figure 27) allow curb cuts and parking lots to front the street. “B” streets are allowed for the continuation of Parson, South and Lincoln Streets as well as other internal streets. “B” streets must contain the dimensions and aspects shown in cross section on this page.

All buildings on “A” streets should be friendly to the street.

Buildings on “A” streets should be friendly to pedestrians by following these urban design rules:

- 90-100% of the building faces the “A” street
- It is built one to five feet from street right of way
- 60% of the front of the first floor is transparent windows or glazing
- The primary building entrance faces “A” street
- The first floor of buildings should have active uses - stores, restaurants, services - where people come and go often.

Figure 24: Sidewalk with Furnishing Zones



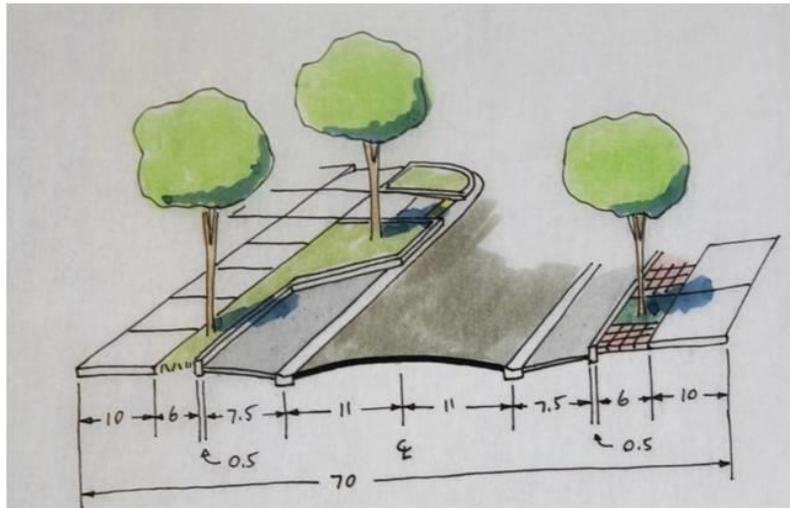
Source: ENP & Associates

Figure 25: Driveway Apron Example



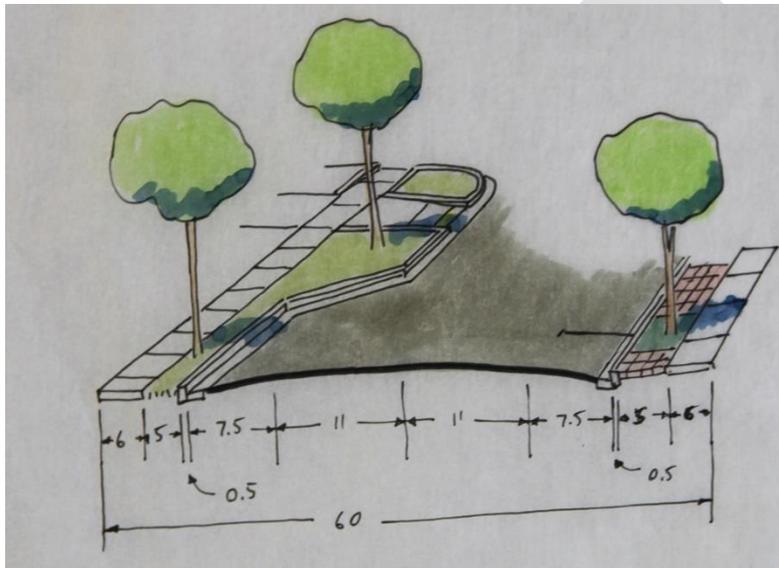
Source: AECOM

Figure 26: Water Street “A” Street Cross Section



Source: AECOM

Figure 27: Water Street “B” Street Cross Section



Source: AECOM

Market Considerations

The vacant property on Water Street offers developers an opportunity to build from the ground up, with little or no environmental remediation. All other development opportunities in the City involve the re-use of existing buildings, which require specialized design, or probable demolition and environmental clean-up.

Because of these advantages, the Water Street development site offers opportunities for larger stores and national retailers to locate in the City. With the coming recreation center, this site can be attractive for businesses such as a sporting goods store, but also is a marketable site for a hardware store, major grocery store, pharmacy, and neighborhood types of goods and services. A full-service grocery store has been requested by residents for many years and was throughout the Master Plan process.

Housing has always been part of the vision for the redevelopment of Water Street and the site offers a central location near goods and services. Upper story housing in nearby Depot Town and the Historic Downtown have waiting lists and were easily leased, even in tough economic times in the late 2000s. During the charrettes, residents expressed the need for attached or multiple family housing for seniors and for young professionals.

The market will most likely dictate the height of the buildings. The site is more likely to be filled in a shorter amount of time if the buildings are one to two stories. If the buildings are 3-4 stories, complete development of the site will take longer, probably with a first building, a period of 3-5 years with little to no activity and then a flurry of development. In the form-based code, buildings with two or more stories may be required on “A” streets.

If train service comes to Depot Town, the market situation for Water Street will change as the site is within a 10-15 minute walk from the location of the train station. Most cities have seen market pressure for attached or multiple-family housing within walking distance of new transit stations.

No matter what use is most marketable at the time, the buildings should abide by the urban design standards detailed previously. The City will continue to work with real estate professionals to market and develop the site. A consistent and coherent marketing and development process will attract investment interest.

BAY LOGISTICS SITE (FORMER MOTOR WHEEL)

This property, just east of the railroad and Huron River north of Forest, has a long history of industrial activity. Currently, the 30-acre site is a warehousing and distribution facility. Due to the history of the site, any use other than industrial would most likely require environmental remediation. The upcoming form-based code should allow the current form and use to continue.

The City Framework designates this parcel as a district but the concept plan on the following page shows the site designed as a central neighborhood. The site is within a 10-minute walk of the anticipated train station in Depot Town just to the south. As with the Water Street site, demand for attached or multiple-family housing is anticipated within walking distance of daily commuter train service. Also, the site is within walking distance to EMU's campus, attractive to EMU students, faculty and staff. The extent of any environmental contamination is not known and the cost and level of clean-up, the highest of which is residential as required by the State of Michigan, will influence redevelopment costs.

Market analysis for this Master Plan concluded this site may be marketable as a larger scale mixed use development. It could incorporate many of the unmet shopping needs for students and professionals within a new rental housing complex that shares a parking structure with EMU, residents and shoppers. The concept plan for the site, shown in Figure 28, is a rendering of what a larger scale mixed use development could be. The plan is based on the urban design principles outlined for Water Street, continuing the existing street grid through the site. Two multi-use paths are shown, connecting the site to Eastern Michigan University to the west and Depot Town to the south.

When the form-based code is developed, the site will likely be zoned as a district, allowing the use and integrating the form into the surrounding neighborhood if redeveloped. However, redevelopment of the site as a central neighborhood with attached and multiple-family housing units as well as retail or office should be considered if brought forward by an applicant to rezone and redevelop the site.

Figure 28: Bay Logistics Concept Plan

The concept plan to the right shows a possible redevelopment layout for the Bay Logistics site. The plan assumes an increased market for housing, office, and retail, possibly driven by daily rail service in Depot Town. **Environmental remediation costs are unknown and will influence the redevelopment of the site.** The commercial study done for this process suggested this site would be marketable as a mixed-use development with shopping on the first-floor and residential above. The plan shows a new community park in the northeast corner, public green space bordering the cemetery and the Huron River and a new pedestrian bridge crossing the River.

The plan also shows possible redevelopment along Railroad, Forest and Lowell, with a new pedestrian path over the railroad. All redevelopment would be at the initiative of the owners of the property. Drawing by: AECOM



ANGSTROM PROPERTY (FORD/VISTEON)

This property has been home to industrial manufacturing since the early 1900s. For many years, it was the highest property tax payer in the City. The site has two components separated by the Huron River – a large factory on a 35.7-acre parcel and a 25.5-acre parking lot. Environmental contamination has been remediated on sections of the factory side of the site. The parking lot, no longer used, has always been used for parking.

Presently, the property is owned by the Angstrom USA LLC, which is not manufacturing within the factory as originally planned. They owners indicated to the City that they are open to selling the parking lot portion of the site. The site is well-suited as a job site due to the size of the property and easy access to I-94. Through the public engagement process, participants repeatedly expressed the need for jobs in the City.

The concept plan for the site in figure 31 shows a series of additional buildings on the parking lot area laid out in block pattern based on that of the City. Buildings on this site would be built outside of the floodplain of the Huron River and may not be in the exact location shown. In terms of the form-based zoning, the City should treat this area as a district with similar form and allowed uses as the industrial park in the southwest portion of the City. The City or other economic development entities, such as Ann Arbor SPARK, could pursue a certain sector for the site. The Northwest Council of Governments of Michigan has developed a Food Innovation District Guide which could help Ypsilanti bring food industries, from production to consumption, to the site. The site may also be a natural place to cluster sustainable energy companies, building on the green and permaculture movements within Ypsilanti.

Figure 29: Angstrom Property Concept Plan



The concept plan to the left is a possible redevelopment layout for the parking lot portion of the Angstrom property. The floodplain of the Huron River may shift some of the building locations shown.

The street layout continues the existing street network and block pattern. Buildings are placed in an urban setting, with parking pooled behind the buildings.

The trail network, shown in brown, is continued on either side of the property.

This area is intended to remain a jobs district. Redevelopment would be at the initiative of the property owners. Drawing by AECOM

220 NORTH PARK ST.

This a 4.46 acre property owned by the city that sits along the railroad track. In 2017, the site was assessed for residential development. It was determined, based on a target market study, that the site was a good candidate for owner-occupied townhomes. The concept called for a 44-unit townhome development that was not well-received by the neighborhood, and has since sat vacant. The site is located close to Depot Town and the future train station on a grid street network. It is primarily surrounded by residential uses but across the railroad track is a mix of commercial and industrial uses, and it is not far from a commercial corridor on E. Michigan Ave.

In November of 2019 and January 2020, two meetings were held with the public about what they would like to see on this property. The results were varied. Immediate neighbors wished to see the site converted to a park- potentially with art or a pond- or a small number of single-family homes that conform to the existing neighborhood. There was also interest in building along the perimeter of the parcel to protect the pond in the center. Some preferred denser development that allowed around 20 units ranging from single-family to four-plexes. In general, the consensus was on low-to-moderate residential development that was not tall enough to block neighbor's views.

1901 HURON RIVER DRIVE

The 6.5 acre site is privately-owned. The site is primarily a wooded lot with one single-family home. The home's driveway has access to N. Huron River Drive but is set over 100 ft back from the right-of-way. Due to the variety of surrounding uses, this site has the potential be used in many ways that are beneficial to Ypsilanti. This parcel is located close to St Joseph Mercy Hospital, EMU facilities, and the Border-to-Border Trail. Its proximity to both multi-family units and a single-family development provides opportunity for this site to be developed either way.

In January 2020, when residents were asked to share their preferred development for this site, it was overwhelmingly for housing. As expected, suggestions spanned the range of mixed-use office space with lofts above, missing middle housing types, and a large apartment complex with 10% affordable housing. Aside Huron River Drive, this is a contiguous wooded lot that is proximal to the river. Consideration for the existing ecosystem should be made on this site.

1901 Huron River Drive



220 North Park St.



DRAFT

Chapter 11 – Implementation

“Enough planning, now doing” – Favorite phrase of Master Plan Steering Committee Member

The previous chapters provide the guiding values for the City, a snapshot of it in 2013, the framework for the future and the vision of the next twenty years. Many of the projects, such as the bridge over the Huron River extending Water Street, are ambitious. Others are changes in process or regulation. This chapter consolidates the Master Plan into a policy road map.

THREE FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

The City of Ypsilanti will invest resources – staff time and budget, if available – in the following fundamental steps to implement the Master Plan:

Form-Based Code

The current zoning ordinance is use-based and not well-equipped to implement this plan due to reasons outlined in Chapter 3. A form-based code will create a coherent regulatory system to create a safe, diverse, sustainable city. *The zoning ordinance was updated in 2014 to include the form-based “building types” within the “Walkable Urban Districts.”*

Process for Water Street Sale Approval based on Urban Design Standards

Water Street must become an asset to the City rather than a source of controversy. The urban design standards laid out in the previous chapter guarantee an urban form like the Historic Downtown and Depot Town, areas that have been sustained for over a century.

Conversion of One-Way Streets to Two-Way Streets The conversion of Huron, Hamilton, Cross and Washtenaw to two-way streets have been in several previous plans by the City. The conversions will only happen with cooperation from MDOT and investment of time and money. WATS should be utilized as a resource for data, research, scheduling, and facilitation. The City must invest staff time to discuss a process with MDOT and search for money to fund these conversions. Partnerships with Eastern Michigan University, Washtenaw County and other actors must be used as well.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

To that end, the City must build community relationship as part of the implementation of this plan. The following steps should be undertaken and integrated as part of everyday operations, if they have not been already:

Establish partnership with merged school district

The newly formed Ypsilanti Community Schools will influence the lives of Ypsilanti residents and their property values. The City should establish a regular means of communication, be it a standing meeting between the mayor and the School Board Chair, superintendent, manager, or a committee to talk about cooperation. The City should also reach out to the school district to coordinate the sale or reuse of district-owned properties within the city limits.

Continue and expand project-based learning

Participants felt activities for youth were essential. The eco-districts in City parks would be a natural place for project-based learning in partnership with local educational institutions - Ypsilanti Community Schools, Eastern Michigan University, University of Michigan and Washtenaw Community College.

Engage with joint projects with neighboring communities

Neighboring municipalities share many of the challenges as the City. Joint projects - such as road improvements, joint plans, and economic development initiatives - should be pursued.

Build community with neighborhoods

Participants frequently expressed pride in their neighborhoods. Festivals and gatherings in parks were often key to that feeling of community. The City can facilitate community building within neighborhoods by maintaining safe, clean parks and offering services to help with events, such as trash pick up.

Encourage cooperation between neighborhoods

During the first round of focus groups, participants expressed disappointment or frustration that neighborhoods were often at odds with one another. The City can use structures in place, such as the Community Policing Action Council (CoPAC), to bring neighborhood representatives together. However, some feel

the responsibility also lies with neighborhood associations to extend warm invitations to those across the street to join them in an effort or activity.

Celebrate each other's successes

Participants often were frustrated that people in Ypsilanti operate in their own silos. The City can set a tone to break down silos by celebrating the successes of all Ypsilanti residents and businesses, as well as those of neighboring municipalities.

ZONING PLAN - FORM-BASED CODE

In the Fall of 2013, the City of Ypsilanti is scheduled to undertake a rewrite of its Zoning Ordinance to a form-based code. Many pieces of the City's current code can be preserved and integrated while introducing a form-based code approach. The goal is to retain what is working, while providing new standards that improve areas and also allow for the distinct districts to maintain the current fabric of the area or provide new context for undeveloped land.

The vision, guiding values and plans documented in this Master Plan will guide the formation of the form-based code.

Per the requirements of section 33 (2) (d) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008), the Zoning Plan on the following pages describes the relationship between categories on the Framework Map in Chapter 4 and the zoning districts in the City.

Each of the framework districts in the form based code would include:

- Easy to follow procedures and standards for renewable energy facilities, including solar panels on all buildings
- Creation of a no building zone for steep slopes along Huron River for safety and environmental preservation.
- Alignment and streamlining of City processes for planning, renovation and construction
- Historic preservation regulation allow re-use in 21st century economy, especially for houses of worship
- Permit process for food trucks beyond temporary event, possibly in limited locations to be determined during the zoning ordinance process
- Expansion of food producing plants as part of landscaping

ROLE OF CITY STAFF

If the City staff is doing their job well, no one should notice. They are the stage managers for the thousands of details required in the daily municipal functions that facilitate safe development within the City. Staff, particularly those in the Planning, Building and Public Service Departments, need the capacity and time to address the following everyday:

- Existing small business development and expansion through phone calls, meetings and knowledge of appropriate places for expansion
- Quick and streamlined approval processes
- Attraction of new building to redevelopment areas, as well as other available land within the City
- Improvements of pedestrian connections
- Completion of the bicycle network
- Installation of ADA ramps at all intersections
- Rehabilitation of existing structures by working with the owners of those properties to leverage private/public funds
- Stabilization of neighborhoods through consistent code enforcement, community policing and communication.

ANNUAL EVALUATION & PLANNING

According to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the Planning Commission must submit an annual report, work plan and budget to City Council in time for consideration of the next budget cycle. The following portions of this Master Plan should be used as tools to prepare those materials:

- **The Decision Making Rubric in Chapter 2:** The Planning Commission should examine the measures in achieving the Guiding Values.
- **The Implementation Matrix:** Located in the appendix, it is a compilation of the matrices at the ends of chapters 6-9. The Planning Commission should track whether, how and/or if the City is implementing these items as planned and adjust work plans accordingly based on resources and the Guiding Principles.
- **Three Fundamental Steps:** Found at the start of this chapter, the Planning Commission should evaluate progress or achievement of these steps and communicate to City Council the work, resources and support needed.

Figure 30: Zoning Plan

Framework Category	Form-Based Zoning District(s)	Description of character and uses	Notes
Center	Center	The intent of these zones is to maintain and expand the pedestrian oriented character of the downtown, central business district, and other centers of activity. The physical form is of an urban character with uses that promote office, retail and entertainment venues, with upper story residential uses permitted.	Includes the Downtown, Depot Town, Water Street area and Cross Street area adjacent to EMU
General Corridor	General Corridor, Neighborhood Corridor	Primarily suburban in form and are currently limited to auto-oriented commercial and office uses that are adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Corridors contain a variety of medium to smaller parcels and are adjacent to both types of neighborhoods. They will allow parking on the street and require buildings to be closer to the street; with minimal yards, lots will have more buildable area for residential, commercial and office uses mixed throughout.	Includes large portions of Washtenaw Avenue, Michigan Avenue, Harriet Street, Prospect and Huron River Drive.
Historic Corridor	Historic Corridor	Dominated by large, historic homes now used in a variety of ways – residences, office, and retail. Houses of worship and other civic buildings also line these corridors.	Includes areas adjacent to Central Neighborhoods and Centers
Central Neighborhood	Neighborhood Core (3 Districts)	The physical form of structures shifts to a residential character with flexibility in use. Live/work housing, personal services, corner retail and small offices are evident in this district. Buildings are spaced closely, but are separated by setbacks.	<p>Most of the City’s historic neighborhoods, and some others with strong grid structures, are included in this area.</p> <p>The residential buildings types and uses vary on a spectrum with the Historic East Side with the least variety and near campus areas with the most. Three zoning designations are anticipated to preserve the existing character ranging from single-family to a large variety.</p>
Outlying Neighborhood	Outlying Neighborhood, Multiple-Family	Low density suburban-style residential areas, consisting of predominately detached housing types, with some two-family houses throughout the area or higher-density, suburban style apartment buildings. These neighborhoods will have uses largely limited to the type of residential for which they were built. In some areas, like the Heritage Park neighborhood in the southwest part of the City, zoning would be changed so that duplexes and group homes would no longer be allowed by right.	Neighborhoods built in the middle or later part of the 20th century and include a single type of housing, adjacent to a corridor but the street network is designed to carry traffic into the neighborhood, not through it.
District	SD Special Districts	Areas of the city dedicated to a single type of activity. Special zoning districts will be developed for each of these areas	Includes EMU, Highland Cemetery, the human and health services area on Towner, the area around the railroad tracks and the industrial areas in the south of the City.

These tools should also be used in to prepare a work plan for the five-year master plan update. Additional information on how to prepare for that event is in the next section.

FIVE-YEAR MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the City of Ypsilanti must revisit this master plan every five years after its adoption to assess whether an update is needed. The City should use the implementation matrix in the appendix to track progress. If milestones have not been met, the City needs to re-evaluate its commitment to those items and change the Master Plan.

At the very least, the City should analyze neighborhoods to see if and how they have changed. Using data regularly collected and updated by the City, the data portion of the process should analyze trends in homeownership and rental dwellings, the type of dwellings in terms of numbers of units, and the amount of investment in homes by building permits. These numbers should be then focused through the lenses of safety, diversity and sustainability. Sometimes, those goals might be at odds with one another. For instance, if a neighborhood experiences gentrification, with a wave of more well-off homeowners moving in, the diversity of a neighborhood and sustainable equity may be threatened. With that knowledge, the City would then engage the residents in a process to decide priorities and next steps.

If progress is happening and staff time or budget is available, the following items warrant attention that was not possible in this process:

Leforge and Huron River Drive Reconfiguration

This intersection not only between roads but between the City and the University does not function well for pedestrians and acts as a barrier. An intense design process, like a charrette, for this area is needed to find

fixes to the existing infrastructure. At the very least, this intersection should be examined as part of an update on the two-way conversion of streets.

Financing for sustainable energy and energy efficiency

An implementation step in the City's Climate Action Plan, focus groups for this process designated a sustainable energy financing program, such as a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) initiative, a 5 to 20 year priority. Additional planning and effort will be needed to start such a program.

Food Access

Throughout the process, residents asked for better food access in the City, specifically a full-line grocery store. While full-line grocery stores are located within a ten-minute drive of every residence in the City, the industry standard for location of those businesses, many residents can only reach them by bus. In focus groups at the senior high-rise downtown and the Chidester apartments, residents spoke about how buses ran infrequently between their homes and grocery stores located outside the City or not at all, particularly on weekends.

Congress and Ballard

Due to the intersection of three streets, this entrance to the Historic Downtown warrants in depth study to create a safety and preserve the context.

CONCLUSION

This plan is rooted in the facts and people of Ypsilanti today. Both will change with time, but the principles of safety, diversity, and sustainability hopefully will be guiding values for tomorrow.

Appendix

ORIGINAL SHAPE YPSILANTI MASTER PLAN (2013)

CONSULTANT TEAM

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Megan A. Masson-Minock, Planner;
Emily Lake, Intern

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Addie Weber, Urban Designer

Zachary & Associates (Housing & Economic Analysis):

Diane Van Buren, President;
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Christine Peltier, Intern

PlanActive Studio (Form-Based Code):

Tara Salmieri, Principal

2020 PLAN UPDATE

CITY OF YPSILANTI CITY COUNCIL

Lois Richardson, Mayor Pro-Tem, Ward 1
Nicole Brown, Ward 1
Jennifer Symanns, Ward 2
Steve Wilcoxon, Ward 2
Anthony Morgan, Ward 3
Annie Somerville, Ward 3

CITY OF YPSILANTI PLANNING COMMISSION

Matt Dunwoodie, Chair
Jared Talaga, Vice-Chair
Eric Bettis
Michael Borsellino
Michael Davis, Jr.
Jessica Donnelly
Phil Hollifield
Heidi Jugenitz
Michael Simmons

CITY STAFF

Frances McMullan, City Manager
Joe Meyers, Economic Development Director
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Bonnie Wessler, Project Manager
Andy Aamodt, City Planner
Scott Slagor, Preservation Planner
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CONSULTANT TEAM

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Rowan Brady, GIS Technician/Assistant Planner

Implementation Matrix

Action	Time Frame	Location	Actions underway	Completion date
Continue and increase rental inspections and enforcement	Ongoing	All neighborhoods		
Assist continuation and expansion of EMU Live Ypsi program	Ongoing	All neighborhoods		
Plan and zone for range of housing typologies for the needs of all ages and abilities	Ongoing	All neighborhoods		
Continue and expand the number, type and location of festivals and events	Ongoing	All centers		
Finish upper stories	Ongoing	All Centers		
Maintain and expand transportation options	Ongoing	Downtown		
Create “Welcome to Ypsilanti” packages for new EMU students, including web version	1-5 years	EMU		
Encourage use or redevelopment of unused parking lots	1-5 years	Towner		
Encourage development of vacant parking areas	1-5 years	Job Districts		
Align economic development incentives and programs to encourage emerging sectors that align with the Guiding Values and the employment potential of residents	1-5 years	All Districts		
Establish “Aging in Place” Programs	1-5 years	All neighborhoods		
Draft a business attraction plan for Downtown, Depot Town and Cross Street	1-5 years	All centers		

Encourage business and event activity during the day and evening	1-5 years	All centers		
Create a marketing campaign for the City of Ypsilanti	1-5 years	All centers		
Build curbless “festival” street on Washington	1-5 years	Downtown		

Action	Time Frame	Location	Actions underway	Completion date
Use vacant storefronts for temporary retail uses	1-5 years	Downtown		
Permanent year-round home for Downtown Farmer’s Market	1-5 years	Downtown		
Permanent year-round home for Depot Town Farmer’s Market	1-5 years	Depot Town		
Separate Cross Street and Washtenaw Avenue	1-10 years	Cross Street		
Create a “front door” for EMU in the area created by the reconfiguration of Cross Street and Washtenaw	1-10 years	EMU		
Restore two-way function to Cross, Huron and Hamilton Streets	1-10 years	Historic corridors		
Restore Harriet Street as the Main Street of adjacent neighborhoods	1-10 years	General Corridors		
Create “Eco-Districts” in neighborhood parks	1-10 years	All neighborhoods		
Install a way-finding system	1-10 years	All centers		
Increase walkability (2-way streets & raised intersections)	1-10 years	Downtown		
Build curbless “festival” street on River and Cross Streets	1-10 years	Depot Town		
Create a public space at new train station	1-10 years	Depot Town		

DRAFT

Approach on Two-Way Street Conversion

The following lists approaches to be used by the City when approaching MDOT on two-way street conversions.

Approach

1. Express the City's intent to the MDOT to restore two-way operations on the streets within the City and the transfer of the streets' jurisdiction to the City in the City's official plan and in direct communications with the MDOT.
2. Review the City's transportation plan with the MDOT so they understand the overall concept.
3. Review the key reasons with MDOT about why the changes to the streets makes sense.
 - a. Benefits of being bicycle-friendly and pedestrian-friendly.
 - b. Benefits of direct routing for motorists and cyclists.
 - c. Safety benefits of slower speeds, less weaving/speeding, and roundabouts.
 - d. Economic development and property value benefits.
 - e. City identity and aesthetic benefits.
 - f. Way-finding and legibility benefits.
 - g. Quality of life benefits.
4. Make the case for MDOT to fund the project:
 - a. The bottom line is that, at the end of the day, MDOT will have these streets "off of their books" and the City will have some "20-year" streets.
 - b. The streets involved have long lost their state role.
 - c. The City does not want to incur the maintenance costs of the streets while the streets are in their current state.
 - d. The streets are in their current state due to the state's past needs/values for accommodating through traffic and high levels of service for motorists through the City; a condition that is no

longer exists. The future for the streets, as per the City's plans, are now in the best interest of the City and the area.

- e. The idea is that once the streets are restored to a condition (i.e., a 20-year street), then it makes sense for the City to assume the jurisdiction of the streets, and then the jurisdictional transfer should take place. The changes include the two-way restorations, cross-section changes, and underground utility work; according to the City's specifications.

Note that the above was written under the assumption that there is no need for the MDOT to keep jurisdiction over any of the affected streets. If there is a need to keep a route under MDOT's jurisdiction, the route should be Huron and Cross. However, it is hoped that this does not occur.

The final steps are:

1. Have the MDOT fund a the implementation plan (i.e., traffic study, the surface design/ traffic control changes, utility assessment and changes, staging, etc.)
2. Implement the project.
3. Transfer the jurisdiction.

PHASES FOR TWO-WAY CONVERSIONS

The following are potential phases of two-way conversions:

1. Lowell; Huron north of Cross; Hamilton north of Cross; Perrin north of Cross
2. Cross; Emmet; Washtenaw; Hamilton north of Washtenaw; Perrin north of Washtenaw
3. Remainder of Hamilton; remainder of Huron; Harriet

Endnotes

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**Report and Recommendations of the City of Ypsilanti
Citizen Committee on Housing Affordability and
Accessibility**

Submitted to the City of Ypsilanti Planning Commission

July 2020

Executive Summary

Throughout 2016 and 2017, members of the public repeatedly voiced concerns to the City of Ypsilanti Planning Commission regarding (1) rising rents in the City that were putting people at risk of displacement, and (2) limited physical accessibility of the City's aging housing stock. In response to these concerns, the Planning Commission voted in December 2017 to charter a citizen sub-committee to study the issues of housing affordability and accessibility, and to "develop and issue recommendations for specific land use and policy changes for consideration by the Planning Commission and (upon invitation) City Council."

The purpose of the sub-committee, as described in its founding charter, was to inform updates to the City of Ypsilanti's 2013 Master Plan with a focus on preserving and enhancing housing affordability and accessibility, in keeping with the guiding values that "anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti."

The first phase of the committee's work was devoted to fact-finding in subgroups, and was followed immediately by a second phase focusing on analysis of the situation. **Five problem statements** were formulated to capture the key challenges facing the City with respect to housing affordability and accessibility:

- **The cost of housing is increasing steadily.** After the crash of the housing market in 2008, Ypsilanti saw a steep decline in housing prices, accompanied by an increase in foreclosures and a decline in the homeownership rate due to an influx of "house flipping," whereby landlords and speculators purchased foreclosed homes and converted them into investment properties. For-sale housing prices remained low for several years post-crisis before starting to pick up again in 2012-2013. Since then, available housing stock has dried up, leading to a very low vacancy rate, increases in demand, and higher prices for both rental and for-sale housing.
- As a result of these trends, housing in Ypsilanti is **increasingly unaffordable for many residents**. Because a strong majority of housing units in Ypsilanti (69.2%) are renter-occupied, and because renters in Ypsilanti have lower incomes, on average, than homeowners, renters are disproportionately affected by increasing housing costs. However, a significant proportion of homeowners in Ypsilanti are also affected. In total, Nearly half of households in Ypsilanti are cost-burdened (meaning >30% of household income goes to housing costs), and Ypsilanti has significantly higher rates of cost burden than both Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County as a whole.
- **Existing data and measures do not adequately capture the local situation with respect to housing affordability and accessibility.** There is a pressing need for improved measures and additional information to paint a more comprehensive picture of the nature and magnitude of housing affordability and accessibility challenges, and how it impacts specific populations, including seniors, people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and school-aged youth experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness.
- **Ypsilanti's old housing stock poses health, safety and accessibility challenges.** While Ypsilanti's old and historic homes add character to the City, their age and

condition present challenges for affordability and accessibility. Most homes were constructed before contemporary health and safety codes were in place; and just one in 10 houses or apartments in Ypsilanti was built in the 1990s or later,¹ when updates to the Fair Housing Act and building codes began requiring some accessibility features in new housing, such as stepless entry and ground-level bathrooms and bedrooms. As a result, Ypsilanti residents face health risks from lead paint, radon exposure, and mold; high heating bills from poor insulation; and difficulty finding housing that will accommodate a disability. Rental households are at increased risk for all of these factors. In addition to a general lack of accessible housing, there are few housing options adapted to the needs of seniors, many of whom live on modest fixed incomes and/or have limited physical mobility.

- **Ypsilanti does not have a lot of land available to build new housing.** Nearly all land in the City has already been developed, limiting opportunities for construction of new housing. Much of the land that is currently vacant, like Water Street, is considered “brownfield,” meaning past industrial activity has left behind contamination that adds cleanup costs to development; other available parcels have potential or actual wetlands on them. There are significant limits on what types of homes can be built, due to a combination of zoning restrictions (e.g. minimum building envelopes, setback requirements) and historic preservation requirements. And because new housing is typically more expensive than existing housing -- especially in the Ann Arbor construction market, where labor costs are relatively high -- replacing older housing with new construction has the potential to exacerbate housing affordability issues.
- **Current and past policies at the state and local levels have contributed to our affordability and accessibility challenges.** The City of Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance limits construction and conversion of multi-unit dwellings and smaller-scale single-unit dwellings through a combination of single-family zoning, accessory dwelling unit (ADU) restrictions, and residential lot and building envelope requirements. In addition, the City currently imposes a limit of three (3) on the number of unrelated adults that may occupy a single dwelling, a regulation that is stricter than in surrounding communities and which contributes to under-utilization of available housing units. Inadequate oversight by the State of Michigan in administering federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to private real estate developers led to the exploitation of a loophole that allowed several apartment complexes in Ypsilanti City and Township to shed their affordability requirements far ahead of schedule. Seniors residing at Cross Street Village apartments have seen dramatic escalation in rent as a result.

Based on the above understanding of the problem, our committee designed and implemented a multi-stage public engagement process consisting of:

- **A Housing Affordability & Accessibility Survey** to gather up-to-date information on the nature and magnitude of housing affordability and accessibility issues experienced by Ypsilanti residents. The survey was circulated online and via paper questionnaires

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, “Selected Housing Characteristics”

and was completed by more than 500 respondents between October 2018 and January 2019.

- **Interviews** with three landlords of residential properties in Ypsilanti (one with a small number of rental properties, one with a moderate number of rental properties, and one with a large number of rental properties).
- An **Open Forum** to present the survey and interview findings to the public and to solicit public input on a preliminary set of housing affordability and accessibility strategies for the City of Ypsilanti.
- An **Ypsilanti Housing Strategies Survey** to gather quantitative feedback from Ypsilanti residents on the favorability of specific housing strategies in six key domains: (1) Renters' rights, (2) Sustainable development strategies, (3) Need-based assistance strategies, (4) Physical accessibility strategies, (5) Zoning strategies, and (6) Partnership and advocacy strategies. The Housing Strategies Survey was launched online on September 3, 2019 and closed on October 22, 2019. More than 360 responses were collected.
- Finally, the committee welcomed public comment and input through its standing monthly meetings, held from January 2018 to May 2019.

Despite efforts to solicit input from a representative cross-section of Ypsilanti residents, the survey demographics indicate that some groups were underrepresented while others were overrepresented. Males, Black/African Americans, and renters were underrepresented in the survey by a significant margin.

Our **key findings** with respect to housing affordability are the following:

- Prices of both for-sale and rental housing are **rising fast** and show no signs of abating, in line with national trends.
- The most **commonly used measures** of housing affordability fail to capture the total cost of housing as experienced by most Ypsilanti residents, and especially those who earn the median income or less. Monthly rents do not capture the full picture with respect to the cost of rental housing; most rentals require a deposit equal to a full month's rent.
- Over half (54.6%) of Ypsilanti renters are **cost-burdened** with respect to housing, meaning that they spend more than 30% of their income on housing.² Data from the committee's Housing survey closely track ACS data on this point.
- The consequences of the **boom-bust cycle in for-sale housing** have not been the same for all residents and stakeholders. Real estate investors -- some local, others from outside of the area -- who bought homes in Ypsilanti during the housing crisis in order to "flip" them have profited from increasing sales prices. Many Ypsilanti homeowners who purchased their homes at depressed prices (i.e. from 2008 to 2013) have seen their

² Gross rent as a percentage of household income (GRAPI) for the City of Ypsilanti in 2017, according to the US Census Bureau ACS.

property values escalate rapidly since 2013, resulting in substantial growth in home equity.

- The flip side of these benefits to investors and newer homeowners has been a sharp **decline in access to homeownership** for Ypsilanti residents who currently rent their homes, especially those ages 25 to 34. In addition, the boom-bust housing cycle -- by first displacing people with limited wealth and/or income from their homes through foreclosure or short sales and then making it difficult or impossible for them to afford another home in the same neighborhood -- has had a gentrifying effect.
- The **consequences of rising rents** have been acutely felt by Ypsilanti residents, particularly those with lower incomes. Some of the disruptive effects have included frequent moves motivated by sharp rent increases; being forced to settle for poorly maintained rental units that are less accessible to public transportation and other essential amenities; displacement, especially among seniors and people with disabilities; housing insecurity; and homelessness.
- **Source-of-income discrimination** appears to be a problem for renters in Ypsilanti, with 9.3% of housing survey respondents indicating they have been denied housing based on their source of income.
- Protecting and advancing housing affordability and accessibility will require **decisive and sustained action at multiple levels** of government, including the municipal, county, state, and federal levels. Collaborating with policymakers and officials at other levels of government will be essential to ensuring that all people, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti.
- One-size-fits-all solutions do not apply; we will need a **combination of strategies** that are tailored to the specific housing needs and preferences of Ypsilanti residents, including young people, seniors who wish to age in place and people with disabilities.

Our **key findings** with respect to housing **accessibility** are the following:

- Only a small portion of units offer wheelchair accessibility, and houses often require modifications to doorways, bathrooms, and kitchens to serve a resident with a disability.³
- The City of Ypsilanti 2012-2016 census statistics reported that 6.7% of persons under 65 have a disability, or about 1400 disabled persons (auditory, visual, cognitive, ambulatory impairments).⁴
- Accessibility is not limited to the needs of wheelchair users. According to a broader definition of disability, 32% of Ypsilanti residents are living with a disability of some type.⁵ The highest concentrations of residents with a disability are in areas with the lowest average incomes.

³ While there are several of these facilities that offer these amenities, they often have limited availability. Namely, Cross Street Village, River Rain Apartments, 422 Pearl, 420 Emmet, 404 N Huron, Peninsular Place, UGA Townhomes, and recently renovated Ypsilanti Housing Authority units.

⁴ Figures exclude seniors and use a narrow definition of disability ("Serious difficulty with four basic areas of function – hearing, vision, ambulation, cognition").

⁵ Fair Housing Act defines a person with a disability as an individual for whom a physical or mental impairment limits one or more major life activities.

- AARP/Harvard reports that 90% of seniors plan to age in place, and SEMCOG estimates the over-65 demographic will increase in our area by 240% by 2035. Given the proportions of owner-occupied to rental units in the City, it is important to create accessible options in both categories.
- Survey results further emphasize these basic facts, with two-thirds of survey respondents (66.7%) reported that their homes have no accessibility features. Over 1 in 4 reported that barriers to physical accessibility in a home had limited their quality of life.
- Many survey respondents say that accessibility is a consideration in the selection of their next residence with over half of respondents saying a ramp or step-free entrance would be a factor in their choice, and at least 1 in 5 saying that every accessibility option listed in the survey would be a desirable factor from parking, to bathroom and kitchen amenities, to doorways and elevators.

Based on input and feedback from 361 respondents who reviewed 26 housing strategies included in the committee's Housing Strategies survey, our committee recommends that the City consider adoption and implementation of **11 strategies**. The selected proposals reflect the input of Ypsilanti residents who engaged with this survey and, if implemented, will respond to pressing housing needs and start to correct housing inequities in Ypsilanti. They are:

1. **Tenant Right of First Refusal:** Enact a 'Tenant Right of First Refusal' ordinance mandating that tenants receive advance notice when their landlord intends to sell the property and have the opportunity to purchase the property before it is offered for sale to outside buyers.
2. **Just Cause Ordinance:** Enact a 'Just Cause' ordinance to protect renters from wrongful and/or retaliatory displacement. The ordinance would bar landlords from evicting or refusing to renew a tenant's lease without 'just cause' such as failure to pay rent or a violation of lease terms, pursuant to Michigan Act 18 of 1933.
3. **Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance:** Enact an Affordability & Accessibility Ordinance that 1) defines the parameters for affordable & accessible housing based on the City of Ypsilanti's Area Median Income (AMI) and 2) requires new housing developments to include a percentage of affordable and accessible units based on Ypsilanti's need.
4. **Homeless Shelter:** Construct or establish an overnight shelter in Ypsilanti to help meet needs of residents experiencing homelessness.
5. **Community Land Trust:** Work with local non-profit agencies and neighboring communities to establish a Community Land Trust (CLT) to promote long-term housing affordability and accessibility through community control of land. Community Land Trusts are nonprofit, community-based organizations designed to ensure community stewardship of land. CLTs provide an opportunity for democratic ownership of land with private ownership of the structure on the land in order to maintain long-term housing affordability. CLT properties can be interspersed throughout one or more neighborhoods and can include rental homes and businesses.

6. **Assist low-income residents with home-buying:** Assist low-income residents who wish to purchase a home by offering credit improvement services, and mortgage down-payment assistance.
7. **Minor home repair:** Establish a Minor Home Repair Program to assist with the cost of essential home repairs for eligible low-income and disabled homeowners. Eligible repairs could include roof replacement, plumbing replacement, mechanical or electrical replacements, ADA ramp installation or repair, door modifications, and lead or mold remediation.
8. **Visitability ordinance:** Enact a Visitability Ordinance to ensure that newly constructed homes incorporate basic accessibility features that make it easier for mobility-impaired people to visit or live in Ypsilanti. A home is “visitible” if it has: (1) at least one no-step entrance; (2) doors with 32 inches of clear passage space; and (3) a bathroom on the main floor that is wheelchair-accessible.
9. **Increase the number of non-related adults who may occupy a dwelling:** Increase the number of unrelated individuals who may reside together in a dwelling by changing the Zoning Ordinance definition of “Family” to include a limit of two unrelated persons for each bedroom in the dwelling.
10. **Rent Control:** Advocate with state lawmakers to grant municipalities the authority to cap annual rent increases.
11. **Ask local universities to invest in the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund:** Advocate with the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund and to actively support other county-wide housing affordability measures.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest due to systemic racial inequities, we share a conviction that it is more urgent than ever for local governments to proactively address the needs and interests of communities under duress. With a view to accelerating action, we offer a prospective three-phase pathway and timeline for rolling out housing policies and programs over the next 10 years.

Phase One (current Budget year)

Make the Ypsilanti Housing Trust permanent: Assure a sustainable funding source for housing affordability and accessibility by formalizing and making permanent the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund started by Councilmember Pete Murdock and nourishing it with an annual contribution of no less than \$100,000.

Allocate staff time to housing affordability and accessibility: Allocate a significant portion of an existing staff member’s time to the coordination and monitoring of City housing affordability and accessibility policy and to liaising with other units of government and partners on housing affordability and accessibility.

Draft and implement the Tenant Right of First Refusal ordinance (Strategy 1), the Just Cause Ordinance (Strategy 2), the Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance (Strategy 3), the Visitability

Ordinance (Strategy 8), and the Zoning Ordinance text amendment to increase the number of non-related adults who may occupy a single dwelling (Strategy 9) from three total to two persons per bedroom. (*The Planning Commission is also encouraged to consider additional changes to the Zoning Ordinance to reduce restrictions on construction and/or conversion of multi-unit homes, accessory dwelling units, and smaller-scale homes.*)

Begin advocating for State legislation to expand local authority to regulate rent increases (Strategy 10) and for local university contributions to the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund (Strategy 11).

Phase Two (Budget year 2021)

Draft an affordability-focused property acquisition plan that would go into effect in the event of another housing crisis resulting in a surge of foreclosures of multi-unit residences. The aim of this plan would be to ensure that such properties can be converted to sustainable affordable and accessible use, either in partnership with a local housing non-profit or through the launch of a Community Land Trust.

Introduce a home-buying assistance program (Strategy 6) and the Minor home repair program (Strategy 7).

Phase Three (Budget year 2022-2030)

Create and invest in institutions that promote community stability and build toward long range sustainable housing goals.⁶ Pursue affordability and accessibility-focused collaborations at the county and regional levels, with a view to leveraging resources from outside of the City of Ypsilanti. These would include the establishment of a Community Land Trust (Strategy 5) and the construction or establishment of an overnight homeless shelter (Strategy 4).

⁶ <https://shelterforce.org/2017/11/02/time-for-trickle-up-housing/>

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In Memoriam: Liz Dahl-MacGregor and Pete Murdock

In memory of Pete Murdock and Liz Dahl-MacGregor, their commitment to making Ypsilanti a more just and inclusive City, and their efforts to advance housing affordability and accessibility and the work of our committee towards that end.

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I. Context

A. Committee formation and mandate

The sub-committee on housing affordability and accessibility was formed by the City of Ypsilanti Planning Commission in December 2017. The purpose of the sub-committee, as described in its founding charter (see **Appendix A**), was to “review and update the City of Ypsilanti’s 2013 Master Plan with a focus on preserving and enhancing housing affordability and accessibility in keeping with the guiding values of the Master Plan.”

At the time the 2013 Master Plan was developed, Ypsilanti was still recovering from the housing crash of 2008, and housing affordability had not yet emerged as a high-visibility issue. The 2013 Master Plan process emphasized other aspects of the City’s built environment but did not address housing directly. It did, however, embrace as a guiding principle that “Anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti.”

From 2015 to 2017, in the course of its regular business, the Planning Commission heard repeatedly from members of the public about two issues: (1) rising rents in the City that were putting people at risk of displacement, and (2) limited physical accessibility of the City’s aging housing stock.

In response to these concerns, the Planning Commission chartered a citizen sub-committee to study the issues of housing affordability and accessibility, and to “develop and issue recommendations for specific land use and policy changes for consideration by the Planning Commission and (upon invitation) City Council.”

Per the charter, the sub-committee was to be comprised of:

- Up to four (4) members of the Planning Commission
- One member of the Human Relations Commission
- One member of the Sustainability Commission
- One member of the Ypsilanti Housing Commission board
- One representative of EMU
- One representative of Defend Affordable Ypsi
- One representative of Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living
- One representative of Avalon Housing
- One representative of civic affairs organization at the county or state level
- One Ypsilanti owner-occupant
- One Ypsilanti business owner (and employer)
- One lessor of rental properties in Ypsilanti
- Up to two members of the community at large.

B. Housing policy in the U.S.: A legacy of exclusion and impoverishment

Over time, many legalized forms of anti-Black racism and discrimination in the U.S. – from chattel slavery to Jim Crow laws and school segregation – have been phased out. In their place, other, more covert forms of institutional racism and discrimination have emerged. Past and present housing policy in the U.S. is fraught with examples of overt and covert racism and discrimination. These include racial segregation of federally-funded public housing developments; demolition of Black homes, businesses, and neighborhoods to build highways in the name of urban renewal; systematic denial of federal insurance for home mortgages in areas with Black residents (a practice known as redlining); and use of restrictive housing covenants. More recently, less conspicuous practices like real estate steering, racial targeting of high-risk mortgage loans, exclusionary zoning, and discrimination by landlords have been utilized to maintain racial and economic segregation within and across municipalities. The 2008 housing crisis – brought on by a proliferation of real estate speculation and subprime mortgage lending – produced an unprecedented wave of foreclosures that disproportionately affected Black and Latinx households⁷ and rapidly transferred homes and equity from residents to investors.⁸

The City of Ypsilanti has its own, well documented legacy of restrictive covenants, housing segregation, and urban renewal policies that have shaped the local housing landscape over the last century. Since 2010, rising demand and home prices in Ypsilanti, fueled in part by skyrocketing housing costs in Ann Arbor, have accelerated gentrification throughout the City, a subject of increasing concern in recent years. Gentrification is particularly visible in the racial demographics of the southwest portion of the City,⁹ which has become increasingly whiter over the last decade, a continuation of a pre-existing trend.

Housing discrimination and exclusion have severe, long-lasting consequences for Black households, communities, and the country as a whole. Restricted access to homeownership has dramatically limited equity-building; on average, a white household in the U.S. today has more than 11 times the wealth of a Black household.¹⁰ Many U.S. cities and schools are as racially and economically segregated as they were in the 1950s, and research has shown that cities with the greatest life expectancy gaps between census tracts are those where racial and ethnic segregation are most stark.¹¹

While local policy change is inadequate to eliminate systemic, centuries-old injustices in housing, it is nonetheless essential. The City of Ypsilanti has several tools at its disposal to begin the important work of addressing historical inequities and designing a City that is more open, inclusive, and just.

⁷ [Minorities hit harder by foreclosure crisis](#)

⁸ [The Eviction Machine: Neighborhood Instability and Blight in Detroit's Neighborhoods](#)

⁹ 68% of the southwest portion was African-American, down from 80% in 2010 (American Community Survey 2017).

¹⁰ [The black-white economic gap remains as wide as in 1968 - The](#)

¹¹ [Life Expectancy Follows Segregation in US Cities](#)

C. Ypsilanti's housing landscape

Ypsilanti's housing landscape reflects its people, past and present policies, and the prominent influence of Eastern Michigan University (EMU) on the City.

Demographics: In 2018, the City of Ypsilanti had an estimated population of 20,939. With a median age of 24.2, Ypsilanti residents are younger, on average, than residents of Michigan (39.8), Washtenaw County (33.6), and Ann Arbor (26.9).¹² Half of all households are headed by householders aged 15-34, and most householders in this age group rent their homes. There has been a recent drop-off in the share of householders ages 25 to 34 who own their homes; in 2010, 65% of householders in this age group rented versus 85% today.¹³ Seniors comprise just 7.2% of Ypsilanti's population compared with 17.7% statewide.

Ypsilanti has a larger percentage of Black residents than the County and the State. As of 2018, 27.3% of the population identified as Black or African American; 4.6% as Hispanic or Latinx; 4.4% as two or more races; and 2% as Asian. The proportion of the population identifying as White alone was 61.6%.¹⁴ The biggest change in the City's racial makeup since 2010 is a decline in the Black population from 31.9%¹⁵ to 27.3%. The loss of Black residents appears to be concentrated in the southwest portion of the City (census tract 4106), which was 90% Black in 2000, 80% Black in 2010, and 68% Black in 2018.

Since 2010, the City of Ypsilanti's population and average household size have both grown significantly, by 3% and 11% respectively,¹⁶ while Michigan has only seen population growth of 1% and no change in average household size during the same period.

Income: Median household income in Ypsilanti is \$36,982, compared to \$69,434 in Washtenaw County and \$54,938 in Michigan.¹⁷ An estimated 32% of households are living below the poverty line. However, both median household income and per capita income in Ypsilanti are rising, and the latter has grown by 9.5% since 2010.¹⁸

Aggregate measures of income in Ypsilanti mask sharp disparities across neighborhoods. The original 2013 Master Plan highlights these disparities, which track closely with racial composition and historical discrimination. As of 2010, the census tract containing College Heights -- a neighborhood that employed a racially restrictive covenant in the 1940s¹⁹ -- had a median household income of \$59,688, while the census tract containing Heritage Park, Worden

¹² ACS 2018 5-year estimates.

¹³ City of Ypsilanti Master Plan, updated 2020.

¹⁴ ACS 2018 5-year estimates.

¹⁵ 2010 Census.

¹⁶ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/MI,ypsilanticitymichigan/LND110210>.

¹⁷ <https://semcog.org/community-profiles/communities/4130#EconomyJobs>

¹⁸ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/MI,ypsilanticitymichigan/LND110210>.

¹⁹ <http://ypsiarchivesdustydiary.blogspot.com/2012/02/racially-restrictive-covenants-in.html>

Gardens, and Bell Kramer -- historically black neighborhoods -- had a median household income of \$18,828.

Quantity and type of housing units: The U.S. Census Bureau places the current number of housing units in the City of Ypsilanti at 8,868. Of these, 37.5% are single-unit homes (including 3,146 detached and 183 attached homes); 6.7% are part of two-unit homes; and 11.6% are part of three- or four-unit homes. Another 13.8% of housing units are located in structures with five to nine units; 12.4% in structures with 10 to 19 units; and 15.8% in structures with 20 or more units.²⁰ The spatial distribution of different home types within the City is described in greater detail in Chapter 3 of the Master Plan.

Housing tenure: Nearly 70% of Ypsilanti residents rent their homes, while 31.3% own their homes. This is effectively the inverse of the statewide pattern, and reflects both the young demographics of the City, the prominence of property management firms within Ypsilanti's housing market, and the consequences of the 2008 housing crisis, which shifted additional homes into the hands of real estate investors. Use of alternative housing tenures, such as cooperative housing and condominiums, is sparse, and there is no active land trust in the City.

Age of housing units: Just over 30% of housing units in Ypsilanti were constructed before 1940, and a full 50% of units were built before 1960. As buildable land in the City has diminished, so has the pace of construction; 332 units were added in the decade from 2000 to 2009, and since 2010, just 195 units have been constructed.

Land area and population density: Comprising just 4.33 square miles of land area, the City has a population density of approximately 4,800 people per square mile, comparable to that of Detroit today. By contrast, the City of Ann Arbor has a slightly lower population density of 4,100 people per square mile, while Ypsilanti Township has a much lower population density of 1,800 people per square mile.

Land use: Single-family homes account for 37.5% of Ypsilanti's roughly 9,000 housing units and 30% of its land. EMU and other tax-exempt uses occupy nearly 40% of the City's land area, a reality that constrains opportunities for construction of new housing. The 38-acre Water Street Redevelopment area that extends south from Michigan Avenue and east from the Huron River is the largest expanse of undeveloped land in the City. However, environmental contamination of sections of the land has thwarted past plans to build affordable housing there and continues to pose a financial barrier to the future development of the land for this purpose.

²⁰ ACS 2018.

II. Our Process

A. Fact-finding

The **first phase** of the committee's work was devoted to fact-finding. To facilitate in-depth review of existing (secondary) data and information on housing affordability and accessibility in the City of Ypsilanti, the committee formed five sub-groups:

- (1) a Housing Stock sub-group charged with assessing the quantity and quality of housing;
- (2) a Housing Market sub-group charged with examining trends in housing demand and pricing;
- (3) a Homelessness and Housing Insecurity sub-group charged with estimating the magnitude of homelessness and housing insecurity vis-a-vis available beds and housing;
- (4) a Density/Zoning sub-group charged with examining the existing zoning ordinance and its implications for housing affordability and accessibility; and
- (5) a Housing Accessibility sub-group charged with assessing the situation with respect to physical accessibility of housing for people with disabilities as well as those aging in place.

Housing Stock: Quantity and quality

To determine the state of housing in Ypsilanti, the subgroup on Housing Stock: Quality and Quantity consulted the following resources:

- CoStar Custom Market Report- Ypsilanti Market Overview. Costar is a real estate market analytics company that aggregates vacancy, rents, sales activity, etc. The Rental Vacancy Rates over time were highlighted by the Housing Stock Subgroup as a notable indicator of market changes.
- Rent.com, Zillow.com, and Ann Arbor Area Board of Realtors Multiple Listing Service data were monitored to track number and prices for active listings during the time of the subgroup activity- January-March 2018
- U.S. Census Bureau data was reviewed for housing unit counts over time, including a 5-year estimate for 2012-2016. The Housing Stock Subgroup drew from that same 5-year forecast to identify housing unit counts by the year the structure was built and for the number of units contained in the structure.
- Washtenaw County Staff provided counts of "committed affordable housing" through Low-Income Housing Tax Credit subsidies, Community Development Block Grants, and Housing Commission information. EMU housing counts were included with this information based on the Fall 2017 term, both for on-campus apartments and dorms.
- The SEMCOG 2045 Regional Development Forecast was referenced for expectations of changes to housing stock and population changes.

Available information on the condition of housing stock was identified as a shortcoming at the early stages of data collection, due to quality issues being complaint-based and therefore incomprehensive. Washtenaw County Public Health has the mandate to intervene in occurrences of lead, mold, pests, radon, etc., but aggregate data on these outcomes are not consistently available.

Housing Market: Trends in for-sale and for-rent demand, price

Data sources consulted by the subgroup on Housing Market Trends included:

- U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS), published annually. We analyzed multiple ACS indicators, including population and household counts by tenure (owner-occupied vs. renter-occupied), household income data and cost-burdened status, and median rent costs.
- The CoStar Market Report, which provided data on average asking rent by number of bedrooms.
- Rent.com and zillow.com rental listings posted from January to March 2018. Data analyzed included asking rents for properties located within the City of Ypsilanti.
- The Ann Arbor Area Board of Realtors Multiple Listing Service, which provided data on home sale prices helpful in estimating cost barriers facing home buyers.

The ACS presents multi-year estimates for many housing characteristics, and these estimates can differ markedly from “point-in-time” estimates, especially in periods of major or consistent change in housing. Given that local housing costs have been rising consistently over the past five years, ACS estimates of housing costs lag behind the reality.²¹

Homelessness and Housing Insecurity: Estimating the size of the homeless and housing insecure population

The homelessness and housing insecurity sub-group examined the available data on homelessness and housing insecurity in Ypsilanti. Homelessness was defined as those who are “sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g. living on the streets) or living in a homeless emergency shelter.” Housing insecurity was defined as those experiencing “frequent moving, staying w/friends or relatives, couch surfing, difficulty paying rent/mortgage, living in an unstable neighborhood, overcrowding in home, fleeing domestic violence, or more than 50% of income goes toward housing costs.”

Obtaining reliable estimates of the number of people experiencing housing insecurity and/or homelessness in Ypsilanti proved challenging due in part to the inadequacy of traditional survey instruments and methods to capture this information. Accordingly, the group focused on survey findings and service statistics from agencies that serve homeless and housing-insecure clients in Washtenaw County like Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (SAWC) Delonis Center and Ozone House.

Understanding barriers to securing housing and staying housed over time is critical to mounting an effective response, so the sub-group consulted with social service providers in Washtenaw County to enumerate a list of barriers -- individual and systemic -- faced by people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

²¹ [Understanding and Using ACS Single-Year and Multiyear Estimates](#)

Density and Zoning: Barriers to and facilitators of affordable, accessible housing

To characterize the current situation with respect to population density, zoning regulations, and housing affordability and accessibility, the Density and Zoning sub-group consulted the existing City of Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map (revised substantially in alignment with the 2013 *Shape Ypsi* Master Plan and amended multiple times since) as well as ACS data on population growth, housing unit availability, and vacancy rates.

The density and zoning sub-group also looked at broad patterns of land use within the City and analyzed the implications of these patterns for housing stock and prices.

Accessibility: Barriers to and facilitators of physical accessibility of housing

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public.²² The Fair Housing Act and building code updates since 1990 have required some accessibility standards in new housing.

The Accessibility sub-group examined the local situation with respect to the physical accessibility of housing for people with disabilities and people aging in place. To situate its analysis within the framework of federal law, the Accessibility sub-group reviewed Fair Housing Act and Americans with Disabilities Act definitions of housing accessibility-related terms, such as universal design, visitability, and reasonable accommodation.

The sub-group then consulted US Census and ACS data on the number of people with disabilities and the number of seniors in Ypsilanti, and reviewed maps displaying the percent of residents with a disability by census tract. Finally, the sub-group considered regional, statewide, and national data on the projected growth of the senior population, which is expected to increase demand for accessible housing substantially between now and 2035.

The following definitions guided the committee's work on accessibility. A home is **accessible** when a resident with a disability can live independently in that home. The most common form of housing accessibility is a design that supports a person using a wheelchair: first floor bathrooms and bedrooms, floor plans and door widths that can be moved through in a wheelchair, and similar. A home may be **adaptable** if it is not fully accessible, but allows for addition of accessibility features, e.g. through reinforced walls that can accommodate grab bars.

B. Problem definition

Following the presentation and discussion of sub-group findings, the committee proceeded to a **second phase**: definition and analysis of the problem (or situation). In this phase, information from the fact-finding phase was synthesized into a series of five "problem statements" that,

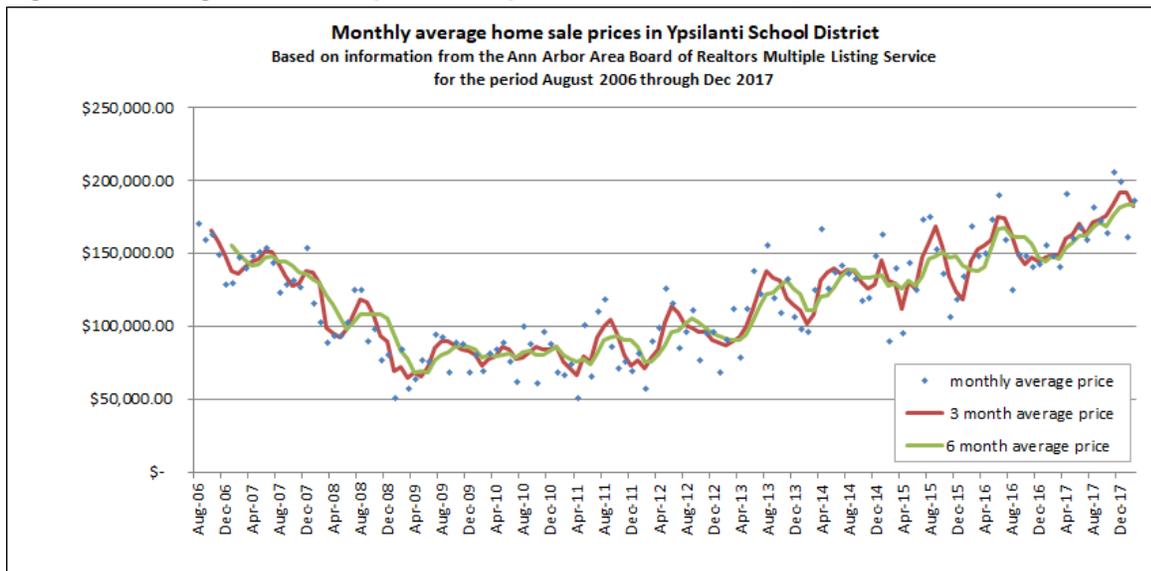
²² [An Overview of the Americans With Disabilities Act](#)

together, capture the essence of the situation with respect to housing affordability and accessibility in Ypsilanti.

Problem Statement #1: The cost of housing is increasing steadily.

After the crash of the housing market in 2008, Ypsilanti saw a steep decline in housing prices, accompanied by an increase in foreclosures and a decline in the homeownership rate due to an influx of “house flipping,” whereby landlords and speculators purchased foreclosed homes and converted them into investment properties. For-sale housing prices remained low for several years post-crisis before starting to pick up again in 2012-2013 (see Fig 1). Since then, available housing stock has dried up, leading to a very low vacancy rate (Fig 2), increases in demand, and higher prices for both rental and for-sale housing. Despite lower prices in comparison to other areas of Washtenaw County, housing in Ypsilanti is increasingly unaffordable for many residents. By way of illustration, a household earning the median income for Ypsilanti (\$35,000) can afford monthly housing costs of \$875 or less, including utilities (see Table 1). By contrast, the average asking rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Ypsilanti was \$897 in January 2018, (see Table 2), and average monthly housing costs for owner-occupied housing units was \$1367.²³

Figure 1: Average home sale prices in Ypsilanti School District, 2006 - 2017



²³ ACS 2018.

Figure 2: Housing Vacancy Rate, City of Ypsilanti, 2008 - 2017



Table 1: Affordable Rent Thresholds by Income Level

Annual Income	Rent at 30 Percent of Monthly Income
\$10,000	\$250
\$15,000	\$375
\$25,000	\$625
\$35,000	\$875
\$50,000	\$1,250
\$75,000	\$1,875
\$92,900	\$2,323

Table 2: Estimates of Average Monthly Rent in the City of Ypsilanti, by data source

	2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates	Costar, 2018	Online rental listings, January to March 2018*
	Median Gross Rent	Average Asking Rent	Median Asking Rent
No bedroom/Studio	\$587	\$744	\$685
1 bedroom	\$677	\$795	\$775
2 bedrooms	\$873	\$897	\$975
3 bedrooms	\$1,090	\$960	\$1,350
4 bedrooms	\$1,377	N/A	\$1,650
5 or more bedrooms	\$1,646	N/A	\$2,300

* Sources: rent.com and zillow.com active listings for dwellings located within the City of Ypsilanti (listings were accessed from January 15, 2018 to March 15, 2018).

Because a strong majority of housing units in Ypsilanti (69.2%) are renter-occupied, and because renters in Ypsilanti have lower incomes, on average, than homeowners, renters are disproportionately affected by increasing housing costs. However, a significant proportion of homeowners in Ypsilanti are also affected. The ACS 2017 found that:

- 49% of all households in Ypsilanti are cost-burdened, meaning they spend >30% of their income on housing and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.
- Rates of housing cost burden in Ypsilanti are highest among renters (54.6%), followed by homeowners with a mortgage (29.2%) and homeowners without a mortgage (12.9%).
- Rates of housing cost burden are higher among lower-income Ypsilanti residents regardless of housing tenure.
- Ypsilanti has higher rates of cost burden than Ann Arbor and Washtenaw county overall.

A growing number of new residents, including students coming to Ypsilanti for college and people relocating from Ann Arbor in search of more affordable housing, has contributed to affordability pressures. The City's population growth has outpaced growth in housing stock since 2012, and there is no indication that this trend will change soon.

Rapidly increasing housing costs are especially consequential for renters with lower incomes, who face mounting obstacles to remaining in their homes and communities. One proxy measure for these pressures is the 20.8% eviction rate in the City of Ypsilanti, which is higher than the statewide average (17%) and nearly 10 times as high as in neighboring Ann Arbor (2.2%).²⁴

Problem Statement #2: Existing data and measures do not adequately capture the local situation with respect to housing affordability and accessibility.

There is a pressing need for improved measures and additional information to paint a more comprehensive picture of the nature and magnitude of housing affordability and accessibility challenges, and how it impacts specific populations, including seniors, people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and school-aged youth experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness.

Area median income (AMI), the measure used to determine eligibility for federal housing assistance, is calculated on a countywide or metropolitan area-wide basis. In counties and metropolitan areas where household incomes are relatively similar across communities, AMI helps direct affordable housing resources to households with the lowest relative incomes. In counties and metropolitan areas with significant income variation across communities, like Washtenaw County, the effect is different. Because Ann Arbor is significantly larger and more affluent than Ypsilanti, it exerts outsized influence on Washtenaw County's AMI, which is \$69,434.²⁵ (By comparison, median income in the City of Ypsilanti is \$36,982.) The continuing use of countywide AMI to determine eligibility for affordable housing assistance has the effect of

²⁴ [MICHIGAN EVICTIONS: Trends, Data Sources, and Neighborhood Determinants](#)

²⁵ ACS 5-year estimate, 2014-2018.

punishing very low-income (<50% AMI) and extremely-low income households (<30% AMI), the majority of which are located in Ypsilanti, by forcing them to compete for scarce rental assistance resources with households earning up to 80% of AMI.

List prices of rental housing fail to capture the full cost of renting. Securing rental housing often requires payment of non-reimbursable application, credit check, and/or administrative fees as well as proof of renter's insurance, a utilities deposit, and a security deposit equivalent to a full month's rent (which increases with rent). Collectively, these costs can pose a significant barrier for renters, yet they are seldom acknowledged by policymakers seeking to advance housing affordability.

List prices of for-sale housing similarly fail to capture total cost of homeownership. Down payment requirements, combined with recurring costs (e.g. mortgage insurance, homeowner's insurance, home maintenance, and property taxes) put home ownership out of reach for many people without substantial savings and/or high incomes.

Seniors: According to the 2010 census, seniors represent 13% of the U.S. population, and this is expected to grow to 20% by 2030. AARP/Harvard find that 90% of seniors plan to age in place. SEMCOG estimates that by 2035, the number of residents over 65 living in Ypsilanti will reach 5,335, which represents a 240% increase over the last measurement. It is clear that the need for affordable senior housing will continue to grow between now and 2035. However, few data are available regarding housing preferences and needs of seniors in Ypsilanti.

People with disabilities: According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 1 in 5 Americans has a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities. By this broad definition, 32% of Ypsilanti residents have a disability, while 6.7% of Ypsilanti residents under the age of 65 (≈1400 residents) have a disability characterized by auditory, visual, cognitive, or ambulatory impairment. Disabilities -- and systemic discrimination against people with disabilities -- can limit economic activity and opportunity; nationwide, median income for people with disabilities is two-thirds of median income for people with no disability.²⁶ Within Ypsilanti, the areas with the highest concentrations of disabled residents also have the highest rates of poverty. However, there is no data available on the prevalence of housing insecurity among people with disabilities in Ypsilanti.

People experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity: While much effort has gone into developing standard definitions and metrics for housing affordability in the U.S., data and information gaps persist, especially with respect to homelessness and housing insecurity. According to the Washtenaw County Office of Community & Economic Development (OCED), 1,541 people experiencing homelessness in 2018 reported their last zip code as 48197 or 48198. People from Ypsilanti thus account for more than half (53%) of all those receiving

²⁶ US Census Bureau, 2015.

homelessness prevention, emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, or permanent supportive housing services. A 2018 survey conducted by Delonis Center found that 33% of clients listed Ypsilanti as their last place of residence, while approximately half (47.4%) of Ozone House clients listed 48198 or 48197 as the zip code of their last permanent residence. There is reason to believe that these figures underrepresent the true scale of homelessness in Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County. The SAWC estimates some 5,000 individuals are experiencing homelessness in Washtenaw County,²⁷ and the concentration of overnight shelters in Ann Arbor may lead people whose homelessness originated in Ypsilanti to report an Ann Arbor zip code where they have been staying more recently. Gaining a clear sense of the magnitude of homelessness in Ypsilanti remains a pressing priority.

Housing insecurity can be broadly defined as the condition of frequent moving, staying with friends or relatives, couch surfing, having difficulty paying rent/mortgage, living in an unstable neighborhood, overcrowding in the home, fleeing domestic violence, or spending more than 50% of household income goes toward housing costs. There is currently no federal definition by which to assess housing insecurity. However, based on ACS data on housing cost burden, it is estimated that approximately half of Ypsilanti residents could be experiencing some level of housing insecurity.

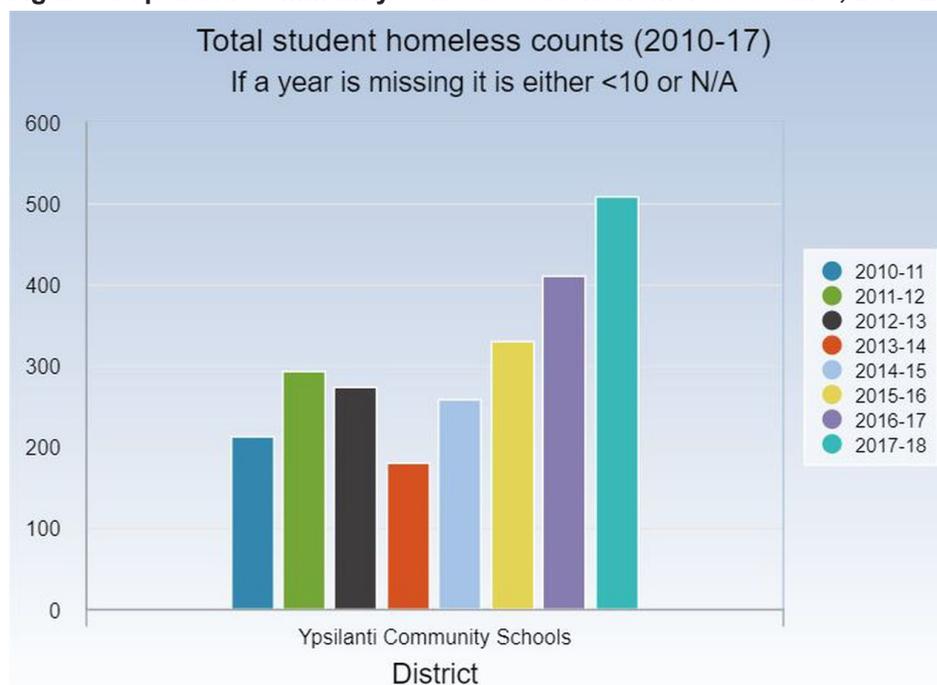
Homeless youth²⁸ face special obstacles; for example, they are unable to obtain housing vouchers or get on public housing waitlists until they are 18, and they lack the rental history required to qualify for renting in the private market. Former foster care youth, LGBTQ youth, and transition age youth (ages 18 to 24) are especially likely to experience homelessness and housing insecurity. The number of youth experiencing housing insecurity (including couch surfing or doubling up with friends or relatives) is presently unknown. *Fig 3* (below) shows the count of Ypsilanti Community Schools students experiencing homelessness by school year, from 2010-2011 to 2017-2018.²⁹

²⁷ <https://www.annarborshelter.org/annualreport>

²⁸ The U.S. Department of Education defines homeless youth as “youth who “lack a fixed, regular, and nighttime residence” or an “individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a) a supervised or publically operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations; b) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill; or c) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.” This definition includes both youth who are unaccompanied by families and those who are homeless with their families.

²⁹ [Ypsilanti schools gear up for large homeless student population](#)
[Washtenaw County grapples with barriers to ending youth homelessness](#)

Figure 3: Ypsilanti Community Schools Student Homeless Counts, 2010-2017



Problem Statement #3: Ypsilanti’s old housing stock poses health, safety and accessibility challenges

While Ypsilanti’s old and historic homes bring character to the City, they also present challenges. Most homes were constructed before contemporary health, safety, and accessibility codes were in place (see *Fig 4*, below). As a result, Ypsilanti residents face health risks from lead paint, radon exposure, and mold; high heating bills from poor insulation; and difficulty finding housing that will accommodate a disability.

Rental households are at increased risk for all of these factors, both because they may not be provided information about the home that an owner-occupant would have, and because they lack the right to make fixes or improvements to address housing quality concerns. Additionally, the oldest housing stock is concentrated in neighborhoods that have some of the highest rental occupancy rates. City rental code inspections do not include testing for problems like exposed lead paint, hazardous mold, or radon, and do not include standards for accessibility.

Figure 4: City of Ypsilanti housing by year of construction

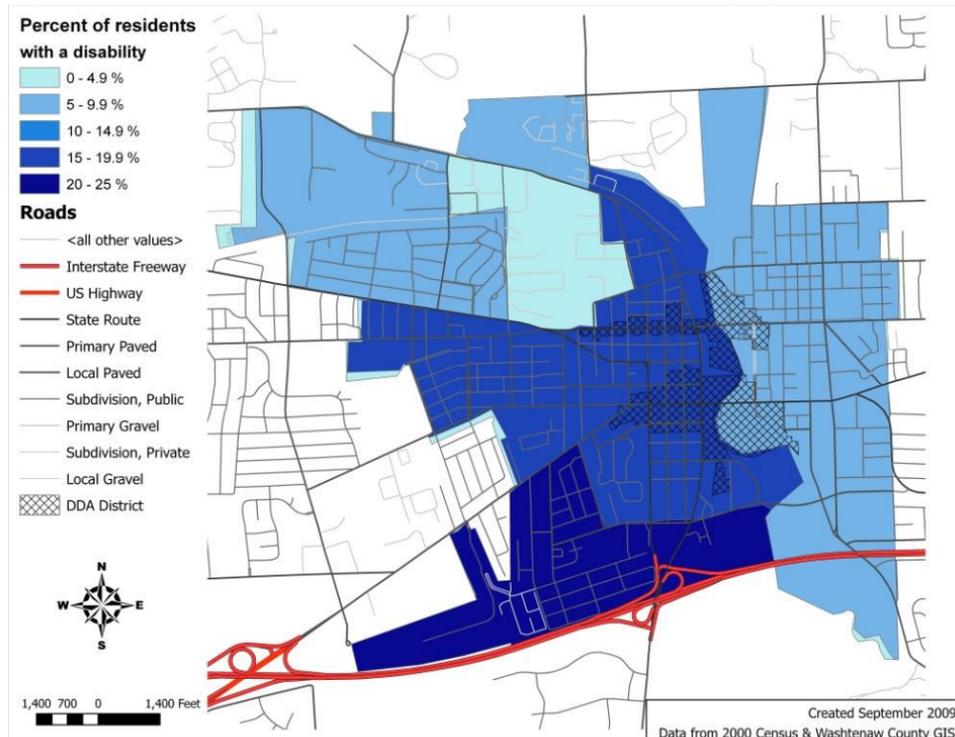


As existing housing stock ages and little new housing is added, Ypsilanti's overall housing vacancy rate continues to decline. From 2012 to 2017, the homeowner vacancy rate decreased from 4% to 1%, and the rental vacancy rate decreased from 12% to 5% during the same period. Meanwhile, the number of housing units available in the City fell from 9,118 to 8,872.

Accessibility: Only 1 in 10 houses or apartments in Ypsilanti was built in the 1990s or later³⁰, when Fair Housing Act and building code updates began requiring some accessibility standards in new housing. As a result, only a few apartment complexes offer wheelchair accessible units, and houses often require modifications to doorways, bathrooms and kitchens to serve a resident with a disability. Given the proportion of owner-occupied to rental units in the city, it is important to create accessible *and* affordable options in both categories.

³⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, "Selected Housing Characteristics"

Figure 5: Proportion of Ypsilanti residents with a disability by census tract



In addition to a general lack of accessible housing, there are few housing options adapted to the needs of seniors, many of whom live on modest fixed incomes and/or have limited physical mobility. Until 2017, Cross Street Village offered 104 housing units for seniors in Ypsilanti with incomes ranging from 20 to 40 percent of AMI. However, these units have been transitioned to market-rate housing over the past three years, resulting in a sizable loss of affordable housing for seniors (see Box 1).

Box 1:

Cross Street Village is the formerly affordable senior housing development that was incrementally converted to a market-rate complex starting in 2017. The developer of the building took advantage of a back-out clause in the agreement made to receive Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), despite the developer's initial pledge to keep it low-income senior housing for a term of 99 years. Residents of Cross Street Village demonstrated against the market-rate conversion on July 12th, 2017. Remaining low-income and disabled seniors have reported issues of negligence on the part of the owner, American Community Developers, to local and state representative's offices.

Heating and other systems: Older housing stock is typically poorly insulated and may be drafty, increasing household energy bills. This is of special concern in rental properties where tenants pay for heating but do not have the right to make energy efficiency improvements, removing the incentive for the property owner to make improvements. In some cases, the tenant does not have control of the heat, but must wait for the landlord to turn it on each year, creating discomfort and potential health problems. Other aging systems -- electrical, plumbing, HVAC, etc -- can also reduce quality of life for residents of rental properties.

Health and safety: *Lead poisoning* is a major health risk, especially for young children. 5 in 6 Ypsilanti homes are in buildings constructed before lead paint was banned for residential use in 1978. The Washtenaw County Environmental Health Department notes that over 1/3 of children (8 of 22) diagnosed with elevated lead levels in 2017 lived in Ypsilanti ZIP codes; 5 of those 8 lived in rental housing.³¹ No inventory exists of housing that has had lead risks abated by the owner, except in cases where abatement was legally required as a result of a child testing high for lead exposure.

Radon: About 40% of homes in Washtenaw County have radon above EPA recommended exposure limits³². Radon is a radioactive gas naturally occurring in soil, and risk of exposure is higher in homes that have dirt basements or crawl spaces, or have cracked foundations or basement floors--conditions common in older homes. Radon testing is easy and cheap, with test kits available for about fifteen dollars³³ from the Washtenaw County website, but there is not a legal requirement to test homes either in rental code or in for-sale units. Also, radon can change seasonally so a one-time reading is not always reliable.

Mold: High levels of household mold exposure can lead to respiratory and other health problems, and over 1 in 3 survey respondents reported having had concerns over exposure to mold in their home. However, there are no legal standards for mold detection or remediation at any level of government.

Data limitations and needs: Assessment of these challenges is difficult because of limited data; as noted, there are few legal requirements to test for or disclose many of these conditions. Survey responses show how frequently residents have experienced problems. Some of these conditions may warrant being added to the city's housing inspections or rental disclosure requirements even if there are no requirements for remediation.

Problem statement #4: Ypsilanti does not have a lot of land available to build new housing

Ypsilanti is sometimes considered "built-out"-- nearly all land in the city has already been developed, limiting the opportunity for new homes to be built. Much of the land that is currently vacant, like Water Street, is considered "brownfield," meaning past industrial activity has left behind contamination that adds cleanup costs to development. Other possible parcels have potential or actual wetlands on them.

The cost of environmental remediation and demolition, combined with the lack of available land to build on, makes adding residential density difficult. High construction costs and low supply compound the problem of finding affordable housing and building more units.^{34,35}

³¹ Email from County Health Department staff.

³² Conversation with Washtenaw County Health Department staff.

³³ Conversation with Washtenaw County Health Department staff.

³⁴ [The State of the Nation's Housing 2018](#)

³⁵ [Paying for dirt: Where have home values detached from construction costs?](#)

Most of Ypsilanti's residential areas have significant limits on what types of homes can be built, due to a combination of zoning restrictions (e.g. minimum building envelopes, setback requirements) and historic preservation requirements. Some barriers to construction of new affordable housing in Ypsilanti include: single-family residential (R-1) zoning (nearly 30% of land within the city is zoned R-1, which restricts residential density); Historic District Commission requirements; minimum parking requirements; and the existing family definition, which restricts the number of unrelated adults who may occupy the same housing unit. These barriers are discussed in greater detail under Problem Statement #5.

Since new housing is typically more expensive than existing housing -- especially in the Ann Arbor construction market, where labor costs are relatively high -- replacing older housing with new construction may exacerbate housing affordability issues.

Problem statement #5: Current and past policies contribute to our affordability and accessibility challenges (state level, local level)

Exclusionary zoning actions: Over the past 40 years, the City of Ypsilanti has used zoning changes to reduce the number of housing units in neighborhoods, explicitly working to limit multi-family housing in favor of owner-occupied single-unit properties. These actions have contributed to the loss of affordable rental apartments over time, while limiting the city's opportunity to create new housing. The current zoning ordinance also limits the potential development or conversion of smaller-scale or multi-unit housing through (1) accessory dwelling unit (ADU) restrictions (ADUs are allowed only in select zoning districts, namely CN, CN-Mid, and HC) and (2) residential lot requirements and building envelopes that effectively prevent the construction of smaller-scale homes (including tiny homes), except as an accessory use in select districts. (Some recent updates to the zoning ordinance, including the elimination of minimum parking requirements for single- and two-unit residences, are better aligned with the goal of housing affordability.)

Non-family occupancy caps: The City of Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance limits the number of unrelated adults that may constitute a "family" living in a single dwelling. The City's regulation is stricter than in surrounding communities, leading to under-utilization of available housing units.

Neighborhood Enterprise Zone: The city has designated the neighborhoods around Harriet Street as a Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ), a State of Michigan program that offers property tax abatements for new home construction or renovations. The structure of NEZ abatements adopted by the Ypsilanti City Council grants preferential treatment (in the form of longer-duration tax incentives) to new purchasers of properties, which could accelerate displacement of existing residents. Only two NEZ certificates have been issued since the inception of the NEZ around Harriet Street; both were issued to new occupants/homebuyers. In combination with the NEZ, the city offered a number of empty lots for sale at the heavily

discounted price of \$1,000,³⁶ foregoing a public asset (buildable land) that could have been invested in the creation of permanently affordable housing.

Loss of LIHTC dedicated affordable housing: The federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program offers tax credits to private real estate developers to create affordable housing. Because of how Michigan administered the state's allocation of credits in the early 2000s, the owners of several apartment complexes in Ypsilanti city and township have been able to shed their affordability requirements recently, leading to dramatic increases in rents. While the state has seemingly closed the loophole for newer LIHTC, this experience underscores the need for the City to scrutinize developers' use of state and federal programs to ensure the promised affordability is actually delivered.

C. Public input

Public engagement and representation emerged early on as key priorities for the committee. Because today's housing affordability and accessibility issues have historical roots in racist and exclusionary policies that range from redlining and racial steering to restrictive zoning and housing covenants, it is critical that people in historically marginalized groups have a voice in both the framing of the problem and the design of remedial policies and measures.

The committee designed and implemented a multi-stage public engagement process that consisted of:

- **A Housing Affordability & Accessibility Survey** to gather up-to-date information on the nature and magnitude of housing affordability and accessibility issues experienced by Ypsilanti residents. The Housing Survey, which was made available online and in hard copy at several locations throughout the City, was launched on December 5, 2018 and closed in February 2019. More than 600 responses were collected; a summary of survey results is included in **Appendix B**.
- **Key informant interviews** with three landlords of residential properties in Ypsilanti (one with a small number of rental properties, one with a moderate number of rental properties, and one with a large number of rental properties). Interviews were conducted while the Housing Survey was ongoing, and the input provided by landlords was used to paint a more complete picture of the factors that influence housing affordability and accessibility. A list of interview questions is included in **Appendix C**.
- An **Open Forum** to present the survey and interview findings to the public and to solicit public input on a preliminary set of housing affordability and accessibility strategies for the City of Ypsilanti. The forum, which was held at Riverside Arts Center on May 2, 2019, generated lively discussion on certain topics (e.g. rental inspections and quality of rental housing) as well as written and verbal feedback input on potential strategies.
- An **Ypsilanti Housing Strategies Survey** to gather quantitative feedback from Ypsilanti residents on the favorability of specific housing strategies in six key domains: (1)

³⁶ [City of Ypsilanti to sell its empty land for \\$1,000](#)

Renters' rights, (2) Sustainable development strategies, (3) Need-based assistance strategies, (4) Physical accessibility strategies, (5) Zoning strategies, and (6) Partnership and advocacy strategies. The Housing Strategies Survey was launched online on September 3, 2019 and closed on October 22, 2019. More than 360 responses were collected; a copy of the survey and a summary of its results are included in **Appendix D**.

- Finally, the committee welcomed public comment and input through its standing monthly meetings, held from January 2018 to May 2019.

Despite efforts to solicit input from a representative cross-section of Ypsilanti residents, the survey demographics indicate that some groups were underrepresented while others were overrepresented. Males, Black/African Americans, and renters were underrepresented in the survey by a significant margin.

III. Key findings:

Our major findings with respect to housing affordability are the following:

- Prices of both for-sale and rental housing are rising fast and show no signs of abating, in line with national trends.
- The most commonly used measures of housing affordability fail to capture the total cost of housing as experienced by most Ypsilanti residents, and especially those who earn the median income or less. Monthly rents do not capture the full picture with respect to the cost of rental housing; most rentals require a deposit equal to a full month's rent.
- Over half (54.6%) of Ypsilanti renters are cost-burdened with respect to housing, meaning that they spend more than 30% of their income on housing (ACS 2017). Data from the committee's Housing survey closely track data from the ACS on this point.
- Real estate investors -- some local, others from outside of the area -- who bought homes in Ypsilanti during the housing crisis in order to "flip" them have profited from increasing sales prices. Many Ypsilanti homeowners who purchased their homes at depressed prices (i.e. from 2008 to 2013) have seen their property values escalate rapidly since 2013, resulting in substantial growth in home equity.
- The flip side of these benefits to investors and newer homeowners has been a sharp decline in access to homeownership for Ypsilanti and other area residents who currently rent their homes. In addition, the boom-bust housing cycle -- by first displacing people with limited wealth and/or income from their homes through foreclosure or short sales and then making it difficult or impossible for them to afford another home in the same neighborhood -- has had a gentrifying effect that is especially visible in the southwest section of the City.
- The consequences of rising rents have been acutely felt by Ypsilanti residents, particularly those with lower incomes. Some of the disruptive effects have included frequent moves motivated by sharp rent increases; being forced to settle for poorly maintained rental units that are less accessible to public transportation and other essential amenities; displacement, especially among seniors and people with disabilities; housing insecurity; and homelessness.
- Source-of-income discrimination appears to be a problem for renters in Ypsilanti, with 9.3% of housing survey respondents indicating they have been denied housing based on their source of income.
- Protecting and advancing housing affordability and accessibility will require decisive and sustained action at multiple levels of government, including the municipal, county, state, and federal levels. Collaborating with policymakers and officials at other levels of government will be essential to ensuring that all people, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti.
- One-size-fits-all solutions do not apply; we will need a combination of strategies that are tailored to the specific housing needs and preferences of Ypsilanti residents, including young people, seniors who wish to age in place and people with disabilities.

Our major findings with respect to housing accessibility are the following:

- Overwhelmingly, Ypsilanti's housing stock is older, predating the ADA and Fair Housing Act, with only 1 in 10 houses or apartments in Ypsilanti built since 1990.³⁷ Only a small portion of units offer wheelchair accessibility, and houses often require modifications to doorways, bathrooms, and kitchens to serve a resident with a disability.³⁸
- The City of Ypsilanti 2012-2016 census statistics reported that 6.7% of persons under 65 have a disability, or about 1400 disabled persons (auditory, visual, cognitive, ambulatory impairments).³⁹
- Accessibility is not limited to the needs of wheelchair users. According to broadest definitions of disability, 32% of Ypsilanti residents are living with a disability of some type.⁴⁰ The highest concentrations of residents with a disability are in areas with the least income.
- AARP/Harvard reports that 90% of seniors plan to age in place, and SEMCOG estimates the over 65 demographic will increase in our area by 240% by 2035. Given the proportions of owner-occupied to rental units in the city, it is important to create accessible options in both categories.
- Results from our Housing Affordability & Accessibility Survey bear out these basic facts. Two-thirds of survey respondents (66.7%) reported that their homes have no accessibility features, and more than 1 in 4 reported that barriers to physical accessibility in a home had limited their quality of life.
- Beyond those experiencing a disability, many survey respondents said that accessibility is a consideration in the selection of their next residence. Over half of respondents said a ramp or step-free entrance would be a factor in their choice of a home, and more than 1 in 5 said that every accessibility option listed in the survey -- from parking, to bathroom and kitchen amenities, to doorways and elevators -- would be a desirable factor. Furthermore, there was broad support for an Affordability & Accessibility Ordinance.

³⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, "Selected Housing Characteristics"

³⁸ While there are several of these facilities that offer these amenities, they often have limited availability. Namely, Cross Street Village, River Rain Apartments, 422 Pearl, 420 Emmet, 404 N Huron, Peninsular Place, UGA Townhomes, and recently renovated Ypsilanti Housing Authority units.

³⁹ Those numbers exclude seniors and use a definition of disability ("Serious difficulty with four basic areas of function -- hearing, vision, ambulation, cognition") that could be expected to underestimate numbers determined by other methods

⁴⁰ The Fair Housing Act defines a person with a disability as an individual for whom a physical or mental impairment limits one or more major life activities. This

IV. Committee recommendations:

In our work as a committee, we emphasized the lived experience and observations of residents of Ypsilanti as forms of expertise that are central to understanding and addressing the complex problems of housing affordability and accessibility. Our recommendations were generated in large part through the aggregation of community expertise sought through public engagement and inquiry.

Based on input and feedback from 361 respondents who reviewed the 26 proposed housing strategies included in the committee’s Housing Strategies survey, our committee recommends that the City review and seek to implement 11 proposals. The selected proposals reflect the input of Ypsilanti residents who engaged with this survey and are consistent with the committee’s analysis of strategies that, if implemented, will respond to pressing housing needs and start to correct historical inequities in Ypsilanti.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and civil unrest due to systemic racial inequities, we share a conviction that it is more important than ever for local governments to proactively address the needs and interests of historically marginalized communities. With a view to accelerating action, we offer a prospective pathway and timeline for rolling out housing policies.

The recommended proposals are preferred across demographics with a notable difference between renters and homeowners; on a scale of 1 to 5, renters assigned almost all proposals a higher score (an average of ~4.4 compared to an average score of ~3.6 given by homeowners, as detailed in Table 3).

Table 3: Renter vs. homeowner ratings of housing strategy proposals

Proposal	Avg. score, renters (n=126)	Avg. score, homeowners (n=220)	Difference
Protect renters from improper eviction	4.54	3.33	Renters +36%
Give renters with criminal records a fair chance	4.15	3.35	Renters +24%
Give tenants first opportunity to purchase property from owner	4.52	3.78	Renters +20%
Build on public land	4.44	3.54	Renters +25%
Establish a community land trust	4.29	3.29	Renters +30%
Enact an inclusionary housing ordinance	4.66	3.42	Renters +36%
Enact an affordability & accessibility ordinance	4.75	3.60	Renters +32%
Incentivize co-op conversions	4.37	3.56	Renters +23%
Build a homeless shelter in Ypsilanti	4.57	3.66	Renters +25%
Install public toilets and benches in our parks	4.41	3.68	Renters +20%
Establish a Minor Home Repair Program	4.60	4.11	Renters +12%
Fund local agencies that provide need-based assistance	4.67	3.88	Renters +21%
Allow existing homeowners living South of Michigan Ave to qualify for the same tax breaks as new home-buyers	4.40	3.95	Renters +11%
Create a landlord incentive program to stabilize rent	4.46	3.58	Renters +25%
Assist low-income residents with home-buying	4.61	3.80	Renters +21%
Adopt a Visitability Ordinance	4.38	3.34	Renters +31%

Launch a Universal Design Program	4.23	3.48	Renters +22%
Change single family zoning districts to include multiple family dwellings	4.35	3.08	Renters +41%
Lift the limit on non-related persons living in a single dwelling	4.41	3.42	Renters +29%
Increase housing stock by allowing Accessory Dwelling Units	4.37	3.89	Renters +12%
Increase housing stock by accommodating tiny homes	4.39	3.99	Renters +10%
Change parking space requirement for new housing developments	3.73	3.22	Renters +16%
Advocate for rent control	4.54	3.37	Renters +35%
Ask local universities to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust	4.63	4.19	Renters +11%
Ask the Office for Community and Economic Development (OCED) of Washtenaw for funding toward housing in Ypsilanti	4.57	3.99	Renters +15%
Advocate for the authority to regulate Airbnb (and other short-term rentals)	3.91	3.39	Renters +15%
All proposals pertaining to renters' rights or sustainable development strategies	4.42	3.61	Renters +19%

A. Priority Recommendations

Our committee recommends adoption of the following proposals, organized by category:

Renter's Rights: These are recommendations that the City of Ypsilanti could implement to expand renters' rights and protect them from discrimination.

1) Tenant Right of First Refusal

Proposal: Give tenants first opportunity to purchase properties from the property owner by enacting a 'Tenant Right of First Refusal' ordinance. The ordinance would grant tenants both advance notice of a planned sale and a specified time period within which to purchase a property, should the owner wish to sell it.

Tenant Right of First Refusal can set in motion a process that leads to the successful transfer of ownership—either to the residents or to another entity willing to preserve the long-term affordability of the property. It has been successful in producing a number of resident-owned properties and partnerships among residents and nonprofits in Washington, DC and other cities.

2) Just Cause Ordinance

Proposal: Protect renters from improper eviction by enacting a 'Just Cause' ordinance to protect renters from eviction and displacement for improper reasons.

The Michigan Act of 1933 Just Cause Eviction statutes protect tenants from wrongful and/or retaliatory eviction. They limit a landlord's ability to evict tenants to specific reasons, such as failure to pay rent or for violation of the lease terms. A city Just Cause

Ordinance could extend the protections of Michigan Act 1933 to lease renewals, and bar rental property owners from refusing to renew a tenant's lease without 'just cause'.

Sustainable Development: These are recommendations that the City of Ypsilanti could implement to prioritize the sustainable development of affordable and accessible housing, as well as to provide safe shelter to all residents.

3) **Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance**

Proposal: Enact an Affordability & Accessibility Ordinance that (1) defines the parameters for affordable and accessible housing based on Ypsilanti's median income rather than countywide median income and (2) requires new housing developments that receive public funding or tax subsidies to include a percentage of affordable and accessible units in line with Ypsilanti's need.

Enacting an Affordability Ordinance would help set the stage for future adoption of an inclusionary housing policy by tying affordability thresholds to Ypsilanti's median income rather than the median income of Washtenaw County as a whole. This would help ensure that affordable housing subsidies and resources in Ypsilanti are adapted to local conditions and directed to those who need them most.

Disabled residents in Ypsilanti are predominantly low-income and many live in older units within the City. An Accessibility Ordinance based on these figures would take the needs of disabled residents into account when determining new construction and rehabilitation requirements.

4) **Homeless Shelter**

Proposal: Build or establish an overnight shelter in Ypsilanti to help meet needs of residents experiencing homelessness.

Ozone House's newly constructed 26-bed youth shelter on North Huron River Drive is now serving homeless youth, but Ypsilanti does not have an overnight shelter for adults and families experiencing homelessness. Adding a shelter for adults and families would help ensure that everyone has access to a safe place to stay in times of acute need.

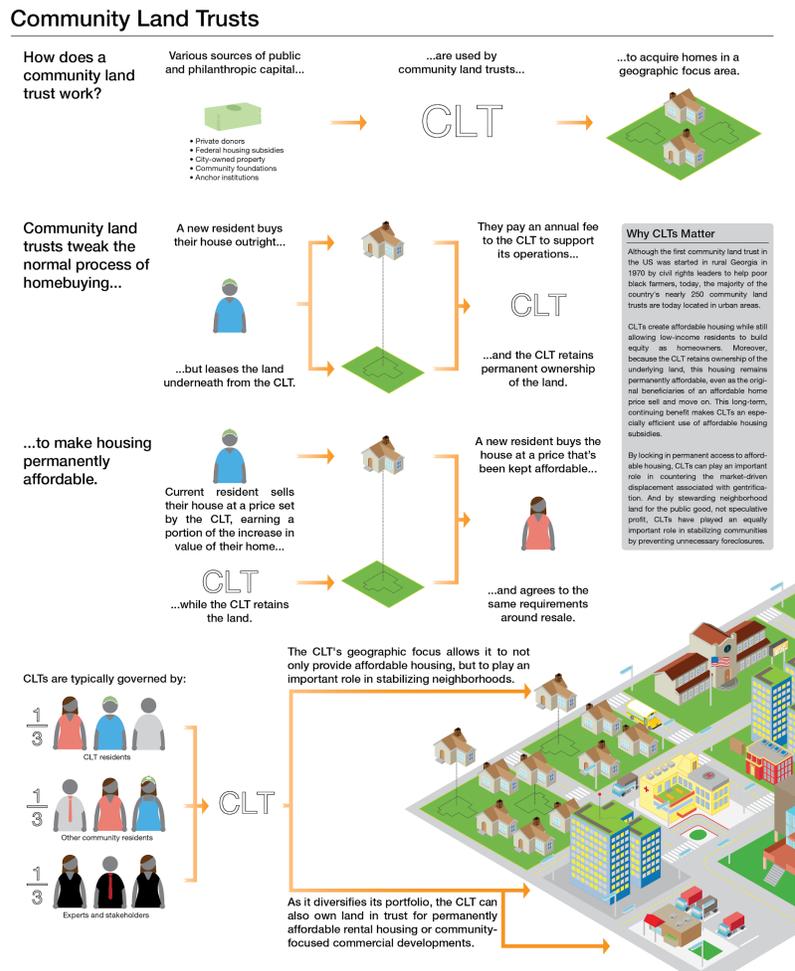
5) **Community Land Trust**

Proposal: Establish a Community Land Trust (CLT) to promote long-term housing affordability and accessibility through community control of land.

Community Land Trusts are nonprofit, community-based organizations designed to ensure community stewardship of land. They combine democratic ownership of land with private ownership of structures on the land. Most CLTs limit the rate at which the structures they manage can appreciate each year, so that the affordability of those

structures is preserved over time. CLTs can be interspersed throughout one or more neighborhoods, and can include businesses and single- and multi-family homes.

There are multiple ways of funding and running a CLT. The City of Ypsilanti could provide financial incentives for the formation of independent, neighborhood-based CLTs in core neighborhoods and center districts. It could also advocate with Washtenaw County and the City of Ann Arbor for the establishment of a countywide, publicly funded CLT like the one in Orange County, North Carolina. The infographic below from the Democracy Collaborative describes the basic attributes of a CLT.



Need-based assistance: These are recommendations that the City of Ypsilanti could implement to support low-income residents' home improvement and housing stability.

6) Assist low-income residents with home-buying

Proposal: Assist low-income residents who wish to purchase a home by offering credit improvement services, and mortgage down-payment assistance.

Seven in ten households in Ypsilanti are (predominantly low-income) renter households—a significantly higher percentage to comparable college towns of its size. The city could provide assistance to low-income households who wish to buy homes, to reduce barriers to homeownership and promote housing stability.

7) **Minor home repair**

Proposal: Establish a Minor Home Repair Program to assist with the cost of essential home repairs for eligible low-income and disabled homeowners. Eligible repairs could include roof replacement, plumbing replacement, mechanical or electrical replacements, ADA ramp installation or repair, door modifications, and lead or mold remediation.

Cities in the State of Michigan can choose to offer small grants for home improvements. For example, the City of Battle Creek has a Minor Home Repair Program that provides eligible low-income homeowners with up to one-half of the cost of roof replacement, or other exterior code compliance or health and safety issues.

Accessibility: In addition to enacting an Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance as recommended above, the City of Ypsilanti could enact a Visitability Ordinance to expand physical accessibility of housing and public life in Ypsilanti.

8) **Visitability ordinance**

Proposal: Adopt a Visitability Ordinance to ensure that newly constructed homes incorporate basic accessibility features that make it easier for mobility-impaired people to visit or live in Ypsilanti.

A home can be considered “visitable” if it has: (1) at least one no-step entrance; (2) doors with 32 inches of clear passage space; and (3) a bathroom on the main floor that is wheelchair-accessible. Some US cities have adopted mandatory visitability ordinances for all newly built homes; others have adopted visitability ordinances for houses built with public funding or tax incentives.

Zoning: These are zoning recommendations that the City of Ypsilanti could implement to expand density and housing affordability through land use policy.

9) **Lift the limit on non-related adults per dwelling**

Proposal: Increase the number of unrelated individuals who may reside together in a dwelling by changing the Zoning Ordinance definition of Family to include a limit of two unrelated persons for each bedroom in the dwelling.

The current City of Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance definition of a “family” limits the number of unrelated individuals that may occupy a single-family home as follows: “A group of

persons, none of whom are related to each other by blood, marriage, or adoption, who reside together in a single dwelling unit, provided that the total number of occupants in such group shall not exceed three, except in the MD district and in any permitted residential uses in any corridor district the total number of occupants in this group shall not exceed four, unless otherwise provided for in this chapter; or". This section may be updated to "A group of persons, none of whom are related to each other by blood, marriage, or adoption, who reside together in a single dwelling unit, provided that the total number of occupants in such group shall not exceed two for each bedroom in the dwelling; or"

Advocacy and partnership: These are proposals that the City of Ypsilanti could advocate for on the state, county, and local level to expand and sustain housing affordability in Ypsilanti and beyond, through partnership and/or legislative change.

10) **Rent Control**

Proposal: Advocate with state lawmakers to grant municipalities the authority to cap annual rent increases.

Michigan law currently prohibits local government units from enacting or enforcing rent control policies. Two bills introduced in 2017 (House Bills 4686 and 4687) would (1) revise the law to create an exception to the rent control prohibition and (2) give local governments the power to prevent landlords from charging tenants that have a disability or elderly tenants more than 50 percent of their income in rent. Another approach to capping rent increases would be to allow rents to appreciate by a fixed percentage each year; for example, Oregon recently passed a statewide rent control bill that caps annual rent increases at inflation plus 7 percent.

11) **Ask Universities to invest in Ypsilanti's Housing Trust Fund**

Proposal: Advocate for the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund and to actively support other county-wide housing affordability measures.

Many reports, including the 2014 OCED housing report, point to Ann Arbor's increasing rental rates driving the displacement of Ann Arbor residents to Ypsilanti. Asking universities and other large employers to fund the Ypsilanti Housing Trust would offer these entities the opportunity to address the harms of displacement and support housing equity in Ypsilanti.

Table 4 (below) provides a visual overview of alignment between the above recommendations and the five problem statements introduced in **section II.B** of this report.

Table 4: Cross-mapping of recommendations and problem statements

	The cost of housing is increasing quickly.	Existing data and measures do not adequately capture the local situation with respect to housing affordability and accessibility.	Ypsilanti's old housing stock poses health, safety, and accessibility challenges.	Ypsilanti does not have a lot of land available to build new housing.	Current and past policies contribute to our affordability and accessibility challenges (state level, local level).
Tenant Right of First Refusal	✓	✓		✓	✓
Just Cause	✓	✓			✓
Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Homeless Shelter		✓			✓
Community Land Trust	✓	✓		✓	✓
Assist low-income residents with home-buying	✓	✓	✓		✓
Minor home repair		✓	✓	✓	✓
Visitability ordinance		✓	✓	✓	✓
Lift the limit on non-related adults	✓	✓		✓	✓
Rent Control	✓	✓		✓	✓
Ask Universities to invest in Housing Trust Fund	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

B. Proposed pathway and timeline for implementation

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and civil unrest due to systemic racial inequities, we share a conviction that it is more urgent than ever for local governments to proactively address the needs and interests of communities under duress. With a view to accelerating action, we

offer a prospective three-phase pathway and timeline for rolling out housing policies and programs over the next 10 years.

Phase One (current Budget year)

Make the Ypsilanti Housing Trust permanent: Assure a sustainable funding source for housing affordability and accessibility by formalizing and making permanent the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund started by Councilmember Pete Murdock and nourishing it with an annual contribution of no less than \$100,000 from the City's general fund.

Allocate staff time to housing affordability and accessibility: Allocate a significant portion of an existing staff member's time to the coordination and monitoring of City housing affordability and accessibility policy and to liaising with other units of government and partners on housing affordability and accessibility.

Draft and implement the Tenant Right of First Refusal ordinance (Strategy 1), the Just Cause Ordinance (Strategy 2), the Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance (Strategy 3), the Visitability Ordinance (Strategy 8), and the Zoning Ordinance text amendment to increase the number of non-related adults who may occupy a single dwelling (Strategy 9) from three total to two persons per bedroom.

Conduct a public outreach campaign to raise awareness about tenant rights and protections in the City. Property managers and tenants should be educated about the Tenant's rights brochure/handbook requirement implemented in 2018, as well as their protection from source-of-income discrimination (including housing vouchers and student loans) and protections around criminal history as stipulated in Ypsilanti's Non-Discrimination Ordinance. Finally, the campaign presents an opportunity to notify tenants and property managers about the resources available to them -- at the local, county, and state levels -- for home repair,

Begin advocating for State legislation to expand local authority to regulate rent increases (Strategy 10) and for local university contributions to the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund (Strategy 11).

Finally, while we have not included broader rezoning actions in our official recommendations, we would nonetheless encourage the Planning Commission to **consider additional changes to the Zoning Ordinance** to reduce restrictions on construction and/or conversion of multi-unit homes, accessory dwelling units, and smaller-scale homes.

Rationale: The recommendations for Budget Year 2020 face relatively few barriers to implementation, as they modify existing codes or ordinances. The Just Cause ordinance and zoning text amendment to increase the limit on non-related adults could immediately increase housing security for residents at risk of eviction and/or discriminatory action. The Tenant Right of First Refusal ordinance would help slow or stem another rapid transfer of homes to speculative investors in the case of an economic slowdown or crisis. The Visitability and

Affordability and Accessibility Ordinances are recommended with a view to ensuring that future development is adapted to local needs and conditions. Advocating for and/or implementing a rent control ordinance at the city level (that would remain non-enforceable until State legislation changes) is a means of signaling that the City of Ypsilanti has interest in changing State restrictions on rent control. Securing annual funding commitments from local universities for the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund would be an important step towards acknowledging and making amends for those institutions' outside role in driving up housing costs and housing inequity in the area, including by enrolling large numbers of students without capacity -- or a viable plan -- to house them.

Phase Two (Budget year 2021)

Allocate \$100,000 from the 2021-2022 budget to the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund. As communities across the U.S. re-evaluate their budget priorities in light of the nationwide critique of police brutality and police-related public expenditures, we encourage the City of Ypsilanti to prioritize housing affordability through a standing annual contribution of \$100,000 to the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund. These funds could be reallocated from the Ypsilanti Police Department budget (which currently accounts for 24% of the total City budget) or from the funds that were set aside for the construction of a train platform. Reorienting funding to housing and other essential services would provide for both a progressive financial policy change and material change toward public safety.

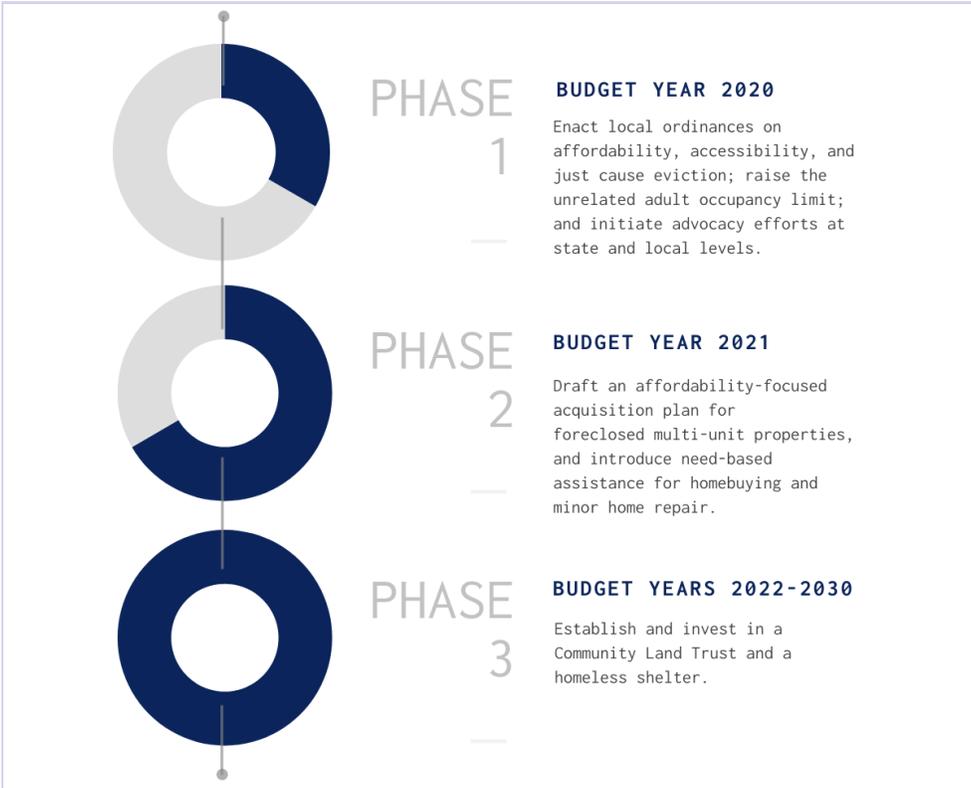
Create a diversified funding strategy for the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund. We recommend that the City create a sustainable funding plan incorporating diversified funding sources. These could include contributions from the University of Michigan, Michigan Medicine, and EMU; Ann Arbor-based businesses with large shares of employees who reside in Ypsilanti; the American Center for Mobility (assuming future growth of its operations and local employment rolls); owners of short-term rental properties in Ypsilanti; and real estate investors with ownership of 100 or more housing units in Ypsilanti.

Draft an affordability-focused property acquisition plan that would go into effect in the event of another housing crisis resulting in a surge of foreclosures of multi-unit residences. The aim of this plan would be to ensure that such properties can be converted to sustainable affordable and accessible use, either in partnership with a local housing non-profit or through the launch of a Community Land Trust.

Introduce a home-buying assistance program (Strategy 6) and the Minor home repair program (Strategy 7).

Phase Three (Budget year 2022-2030)

Create and invest in institutions that promote community stability and build toward long range sustainable housing goals.⁴¹ Pursue affordability and accessibility-focused collaborations at the county and regional levels, with a view to leveraging resources from outside of the City of Ypsilanti. These would include the establishment of a Community Land Trust (Strategy 5) and the construction or establishment of an overnight homeless shelter (Strategy 4).



C. Gaps and Limitations:

Representation: Despite efforts to solicit input from a representative cross-section of Ypsilanti residents, the survey demographics indicate that some groups were underrepresented while others were overrepresented. Males, Black/African Americans, and renters were underrepresented in the survey by a significant margin. This could be suggestive of a general underrepresentation of these groups in City government, non-profits, and other entities that were represented on our committee, and we encourage the City to monitor and prioritize representation in all housing-related actions that it undertakes.

Short-term rentals: The short-term rental market in Ypsilanti poses a potential threat to future housing affordability, since it reduces the supply of long-term rental housing. Our report stops

⁴¹ [Trickle Up Housing: Filtering Does Go Both Ways](#)

short of making recommendations vis-a-vis short-term rental properties. However, preserving local government authority to regulate short-term rental uses under State law is an essential priority in the short term, as it will provide the City with better options if and when the number of short-term rentals grows.

Senior housing: While seniors who own their homes in Ypsilanti would benefit from our recommendations for need-based assistance programs, our report does not adequately address the need for affordable senior housing. One way in which the City could respond more fully to the housing needs of seniors would be through the establishment of a Community Land Trust and the designation of some housing within that Trust as senior housing.

Appendix A: Housing affordability and accessibility committee charter

COMMITTEE CHARTER: Citizen Committee on Housing Affordability & Accessibility

Adopted December 20, 2017

Background

In October 2013, the Planning Commission of the City of Ypsilanti adopted a new Master Plan (also referred to as the “Shape Ypsi” Master Plan), a hybrid land use/policy plan intended to guide development, redevelopment and preservation in the City over a 20-year horizon. It provides the framework on which the City’s Zoning Ordinance is based and also contains guidance for other areas of civic governance, such as capital improvements, non-motorized transportation and development of publicly-owned land.

Two of the guiding values set forth in the Master Plan are “Diversity is our strength” and “Anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti.”

In the four-plus years since the 2013 Master Plan was adopted, issues of housing affordability and accessibility have surfaced repeatedly during Planning Commission proceedings (which include reviews of site plans and special use applications). Rents are rising, in some cases so sharply that renters have been priced out of the City. Barriers to physical accessibility, common among Ypsilanti’s older homes, continue to limit housing options for people with a disability.

These realities conflict with the Master Plan guiding values cited above.

By statute, the Planning Commission is required to review the Master Plan at least once every five years and to make updates as deemed necessary.

I. Purpose

The Citizen Committee will review and update the City of Ypsilanti’s 2013 Master Plan with a focus on preserving and enhancing housing affordability and accessibility in keeping with the guiding values of the Master Plan. The Committee will develop and issue recommendations for specific land use and policy changes for consideration by the Planning Commission and (upon invitation) City Council.

II. Committee Type

Per Planning Commission bylaws, “the Commission, Chair or City Planner may establish and appoint citizen committees with the consent of the Commission. The purpose of the citizen committee is to be able to use individuals who are knowledgeable or expert in a particular issue before the Commission or to better represent various interest groups.”

The Citizen committee is a “special” committee of the Planning Commission (as opposed to a standing committee). It is formed to serve for a limited time and will be dissolved once the tasks and responsibilities assigned to it are complete.

III. Membership

The committee will be comprised of:

Up to four (4) members of the Planning Commission

One member of the Human Relations Commission

One member of the Sustainability Commission

One member of the Ypsilanti Housing Commission board
One representative of EMU
One representative of Defend Affordable Ypsi
One representative of Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living
One representative of Avalon Housing
One representative of civic affairs organization at the county or state level
One Ypsilanti owner-occupant
One Ypsilanti business owner (and employer)
One lessor of rental properties in Ypsilanti
Up to two members of the community at large

All members will be residents of the City. A guiding principle in recruiting and selecting individuals to serve on the committee will be the degree to which the members, as a whole, represent the diversity of the Ypsilanti community, both demographically (in terms of income, race or ethnicity, age group and ward) and with respect to affordability and accessibility-related interests.

Organizations represented on the committee may elect to rotate their representative as appropriate to accommodate the thematic focus of work sessions. Participation is voluntary, and any organization may opt out of committee participation at any time.

All members shall have equal voice and standing with respect to the proceedings and recommendations of the Committee.

The Planning Department of the City of Ypsilanti will provide a staff advisor to the Committee.

IV. Chairperson

The Chair of the Planning Commission shall serve as the Chairperson of the Citizen Committee and will designate another committee member to chair work sessions in her absence.

V. Activities, Duties & Responsibilities

- Drawing on the most up-to-date quantitative and qualitative data and resources available, assess the current situation with respect to housing affordability and accessibility in Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County
- Analyze underlying barriers to affordability and accessibility at the municipal, county, state and national levels
- Study existing affordability and accessibility strategies and models (local and non-local)
- Identify additional strategies and models for increasing affordability and accessibility
- Rate strategies based on their probable impact, feasibility and acceptability in Ypsilanti
- Develop written land use and policy recommendations for adoption and implementation
- Present recommendations to Planning Commission and (upon invitation) City Council

Appendix B: Housing Affordability & Accessibility Survey Questions & Results

Housing Affordability & Accessibility Survey Results

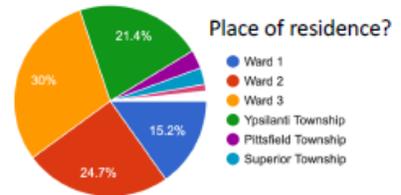
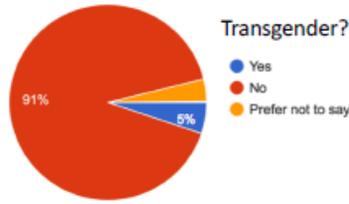
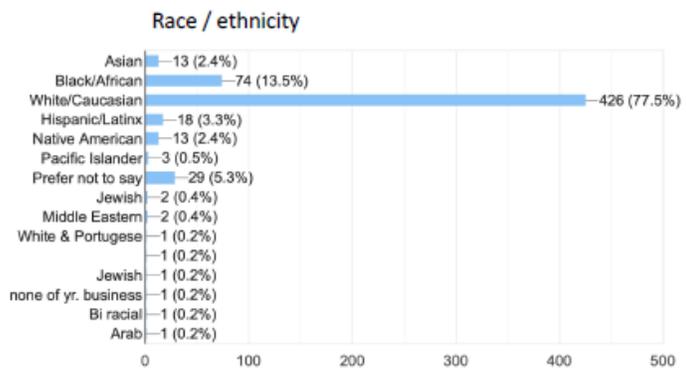
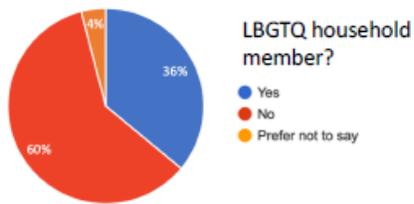
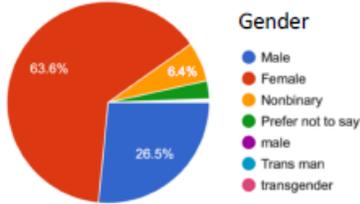
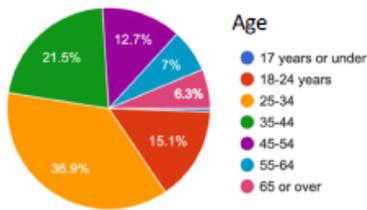
October 2018 – January 2019
City of Ypsilanti

The survey was published online (via Google Forms) and made available in hard copy at several locations throughout the City of Ypsilanti. Of 604 total responses received, more than 500 were submitted online.

Limitations: Because non-probability sampling was used, we were unable to calculate confidence intervals and margins of error. In addition, several groups were underrepresented or overrepresented in the survey, compared to their relative size as reported by the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS). See comparisons below.

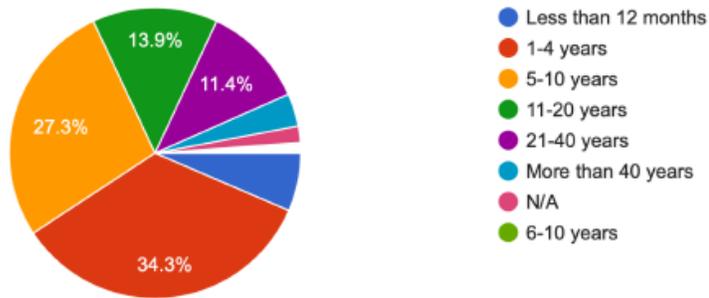
Underrepresented (Survey vs. ACS)
Black/African American (13.5% vs. 30.3%)
Male (25.4% vs. 52.6%)
Under 18 years (7% vs. 13.6%)
18-24 years (15.1% vs 25.1% age 20-24)
Hispanic (3.3% vs 4.5%)
Asian (2.4% vs. 3.5%)

Overrepresented (Survey vs. ACS)
White/Caucasian (77.5% vs. 66.9%)
Female (63.6% vs. 47.4%)
25-34 years (39.9% vs 18.2%)
35-44 years (21.5% vs 7.8%)
45-54 years (12.7% vs. 7.3%)



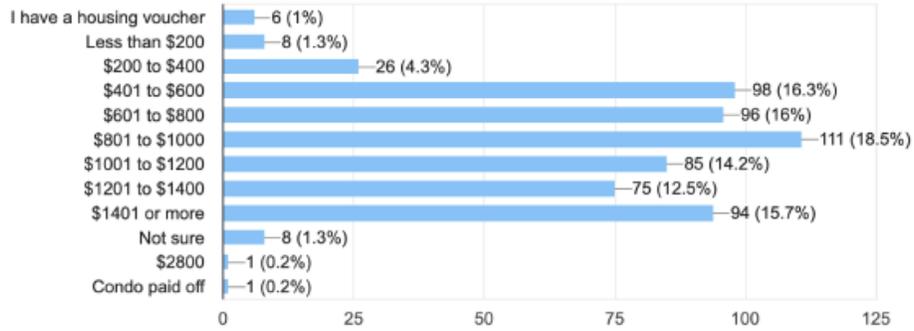
How long have you lived in the City of Ypsilanti?

604 responses



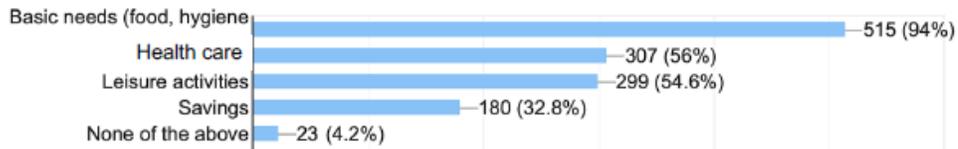
On average, how much do you spend on housing-related costs each month?

600 responses



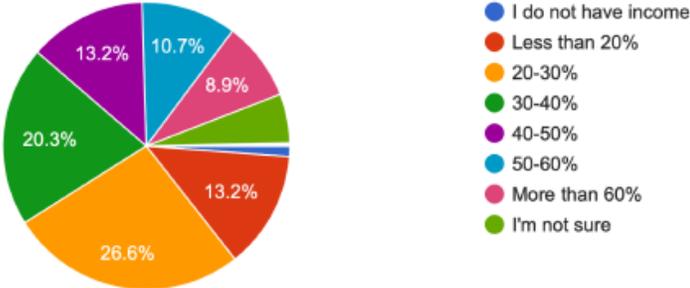
After paying your monthly housing costs, which of the following are you able to afford:

548 responses



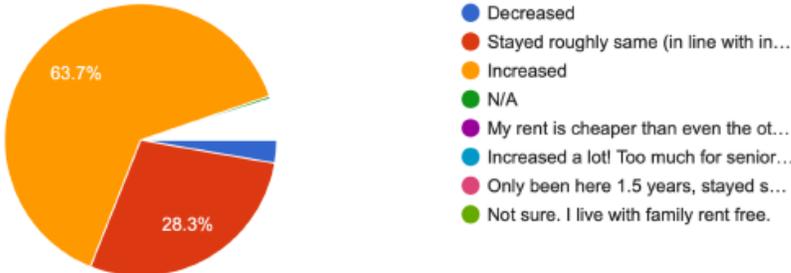
Approximately what share of your gross (pre-tax) monthly income do you spend on the above housing-related costs?

597 responses



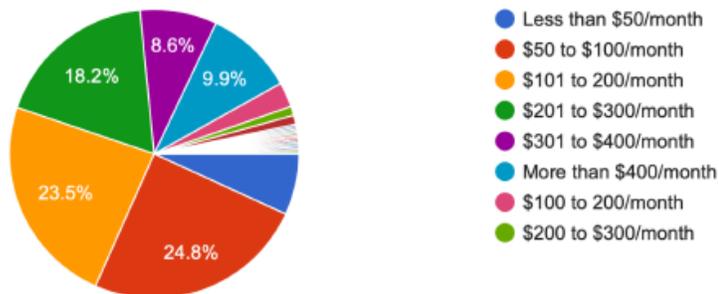
Over the past 4 to 5 years (since 2014), would you say your housing costs in the City of Ypsilanti have:

590 responses

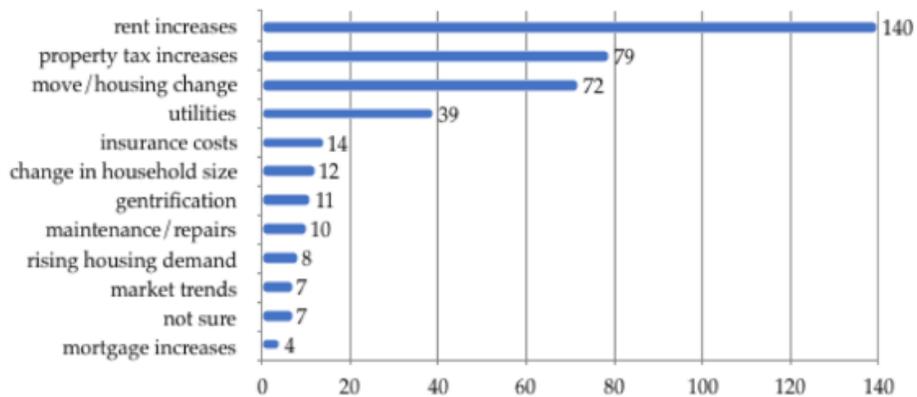


By how much have your monthly housing costs changed since 2014?

395 responses

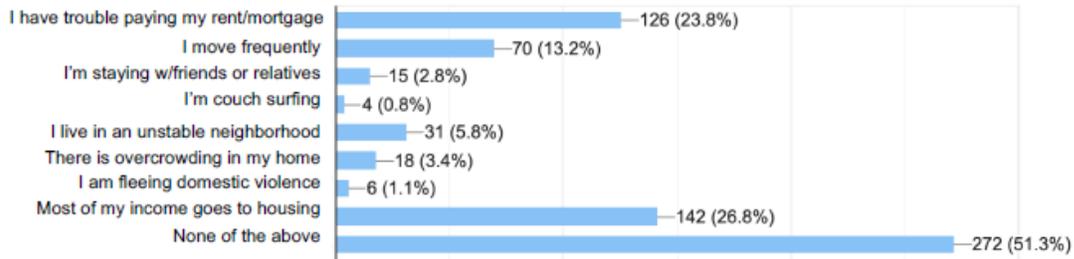


What caused the change in your housing costs since 2014?



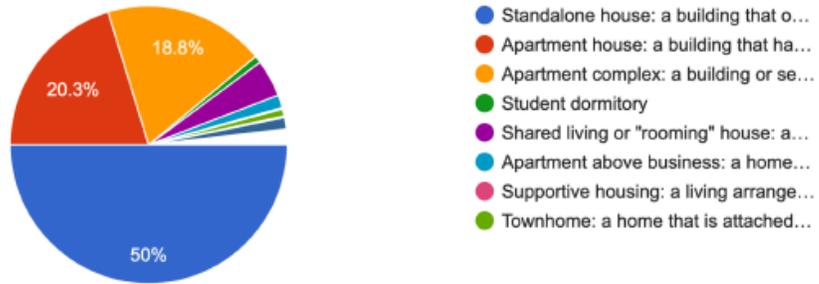
Do any of the following describe your current or most recent housing situation? (select all that apply)

530 responses



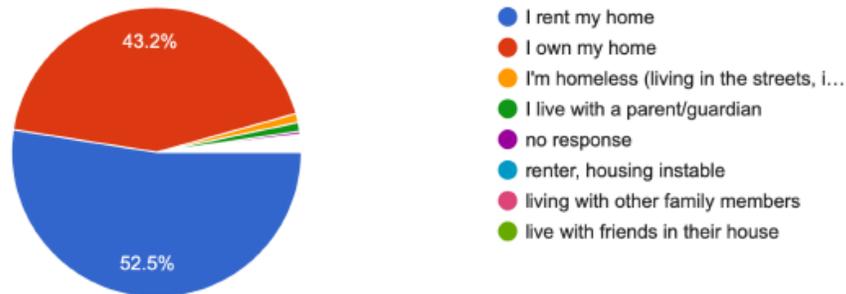
Which of the following best describes your current or most recent home in the City of Ypsilanti?

602 responses



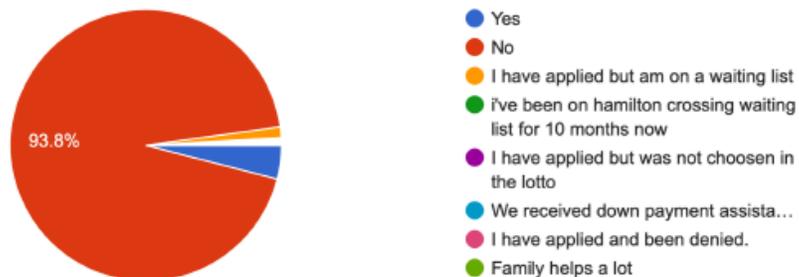
Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?

604 responses



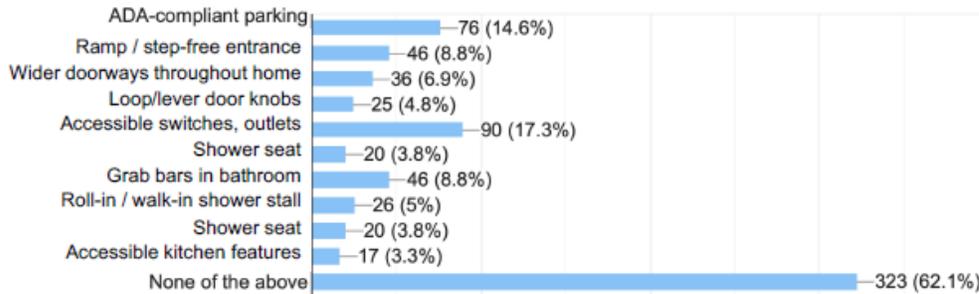
Do you currently receive housing assistance (such as housing choice vouchers or subsidized housing) through federal, state or local government?

551 responses



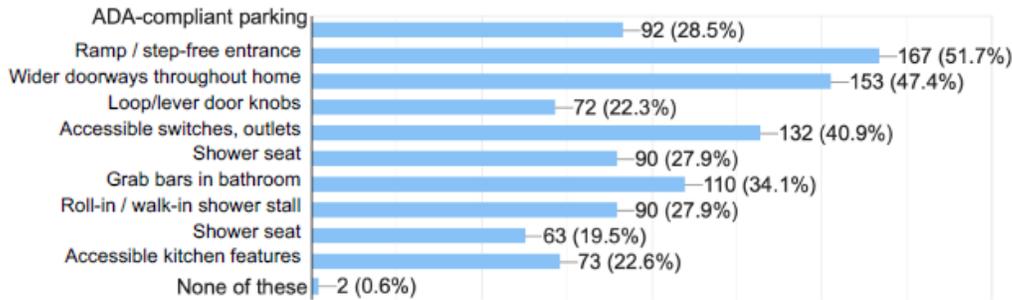
Which of the following features does your current or most recent home have to make it accessible to people with a disability?

520 responses



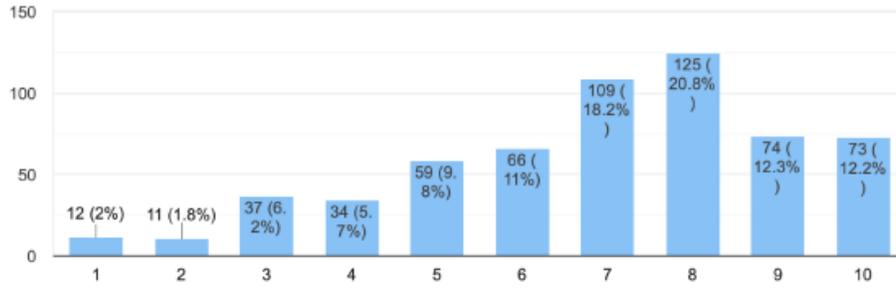
Which physical accessibility features will you take into consideration in choosing your next home (whether for yourself and friends who visit you at home)?

323 responses

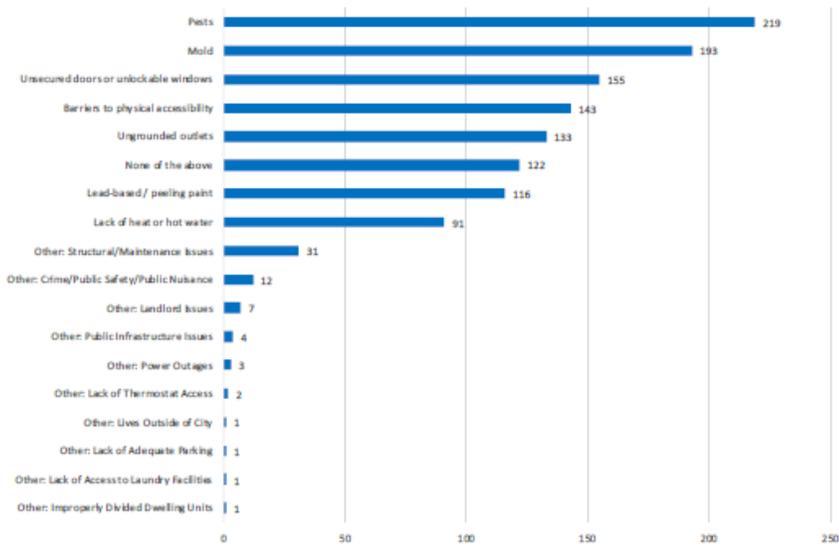


On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your current housing situation?

600 responses

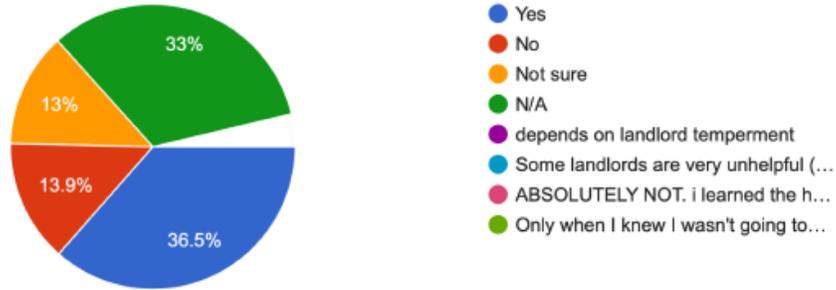


Which housing quality issues have you experienced in the City of Ypsilanti?



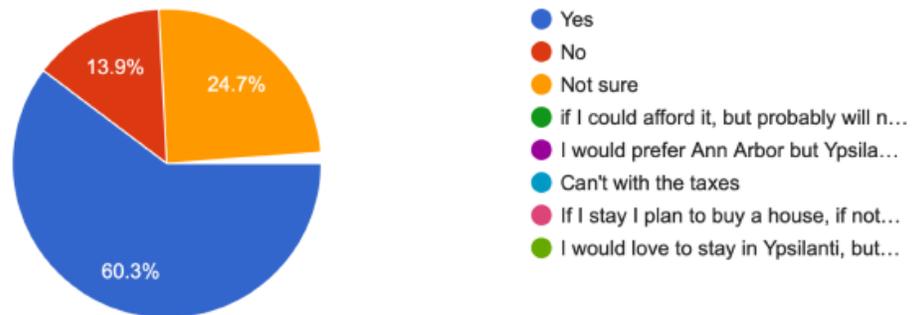
Would you feel comfortable asking your current landlord or housing provider to correct a quality-of-life issue (e.g. pests, physical access issues)?

540 responses



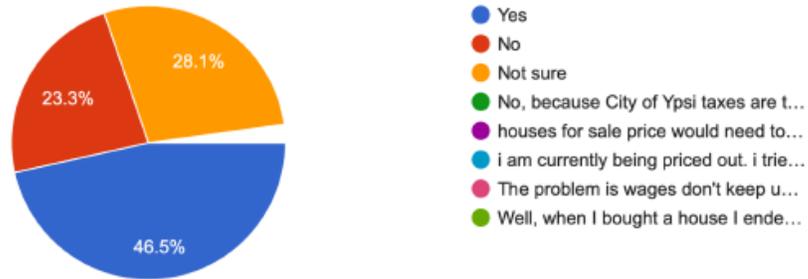
Would you like to live in the City of Ypsilanti 3 to 5 years from now?

604 responses

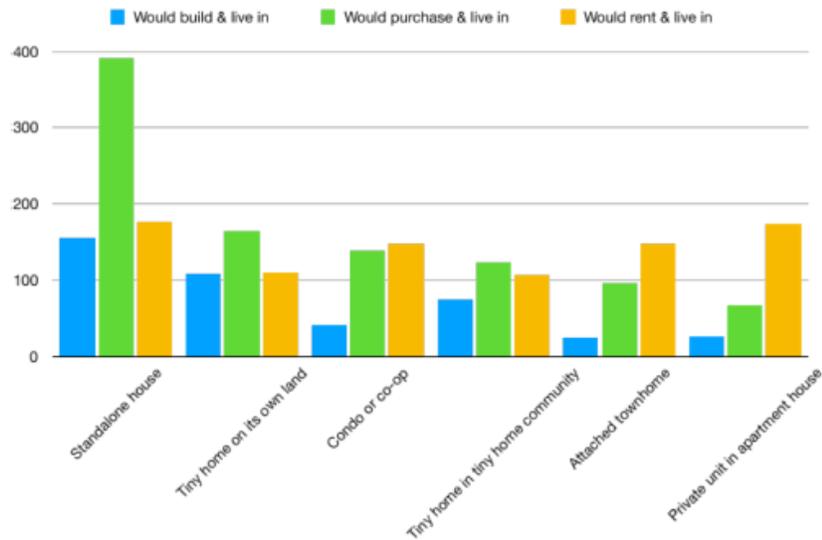


If the cost of housing remains as it is today, do you see yourself living in the City of Ypsilanti 3 to 5 years from now?

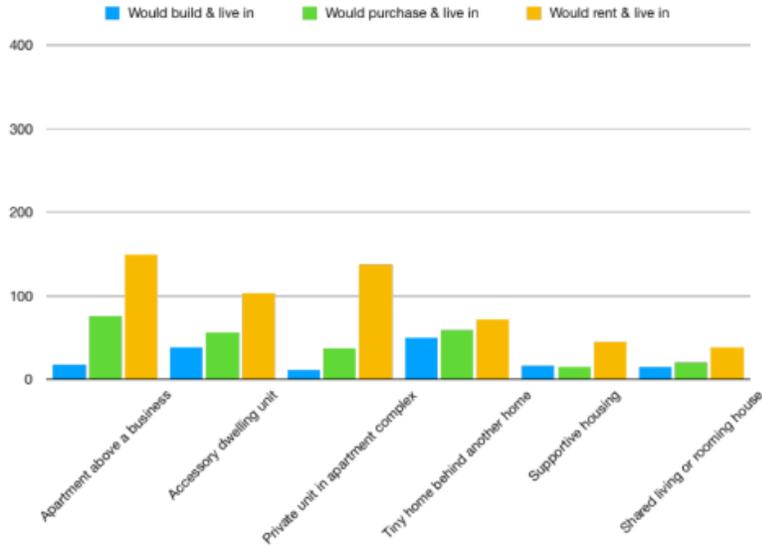
602 responses



If they were available in Ypsilanti, which types of homes would you consider living in in the next 3-5 years?

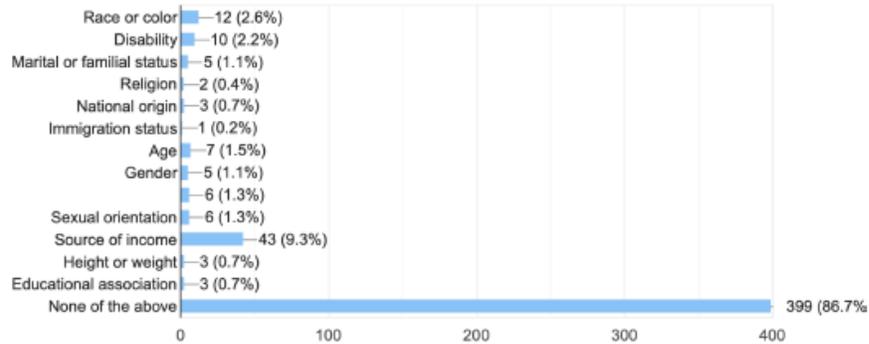


If they were available in Ypsilanti, which types of homes would you consider living in in the next 3-5 years?



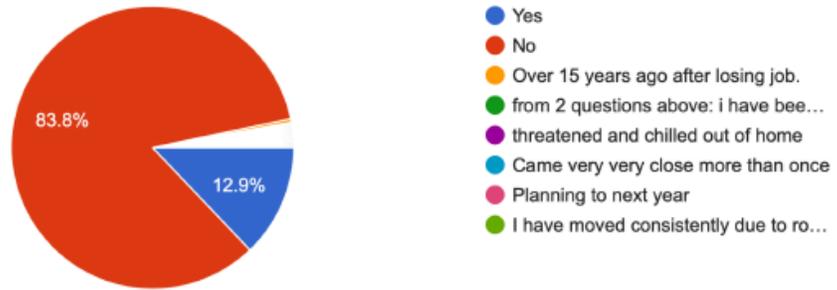
Have you ever have been denied housing or evicted from housing due to any of the following in the City of Ypsilanti:

460 responses



Have you ever been evicted or have you ever moved to avoid eviction due to rent increases you could not afford to pay?

520 responses



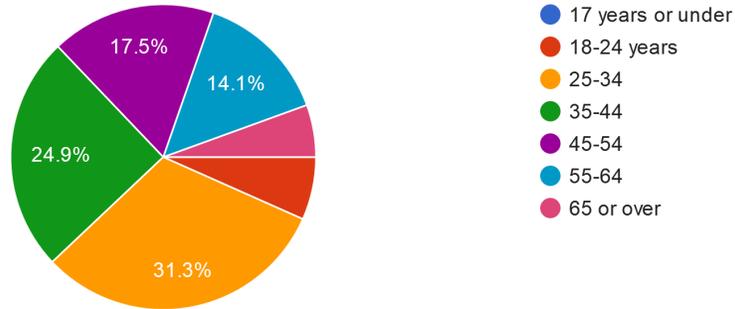
Appendix C: Landlord Interview Questions

1. Number of units owned/managed?
2. Rent range of units by bedroom size?
3. Types of units rented (size and type – townhouse, apartment, duplex, single family home)?
4. Do any of your units have any accessibility features, such as no-step entry, wide doors, roll-in showers, grab bars or ramps? Do you have a formal process for addressing these types of requests?
5. Why change rents? How often? On a set schedule?
6. What do you take into consideration when setting rent prices? (utilities?)
7. Do you allow renters with felony convictions? Why or why not? Experience?
8. What types of units are most in demand? In what size units do you experience the greatest vacancy?
9. Do you accept housing subsidies, such as Section 8? Why or why not? Experience?
10. How many eviction filings and actual evictions do you have in a typical year? What's the primary cause?
11. What's your turnover rate? What percentages of tenants renew leases?
12. Do you have a formal process for addressing tenant maintenance and emergency concerns?
13. Is there anything the city could do to facilitate adding accessibility features?

Appendix D: Housing Strategies Survey Questions & Results

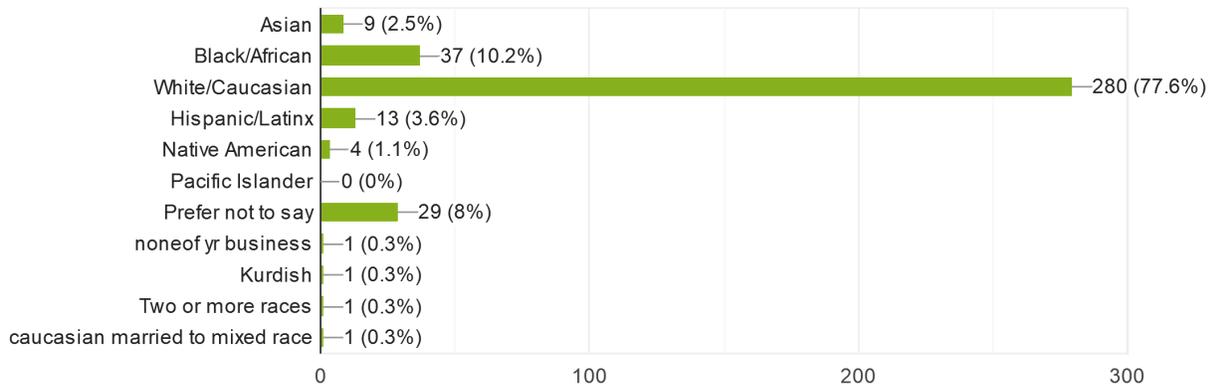
Which age group best describes you?

361 responses



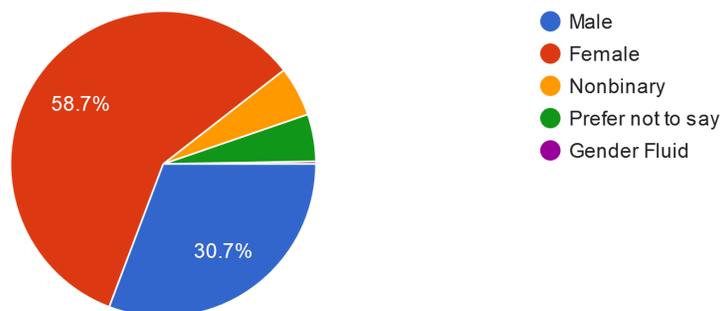
Which of the following races/ethnicities do you identify as (select all that apply)?

361 responses



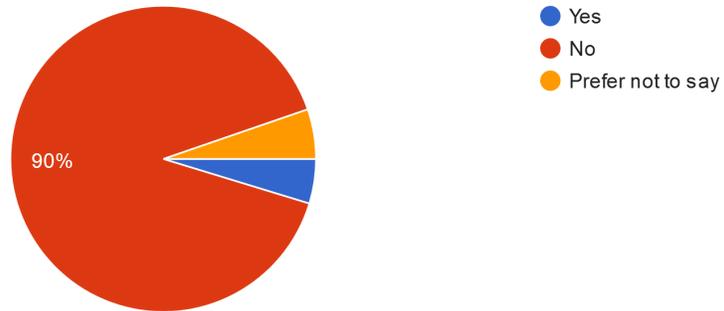
Gender:

361 responses



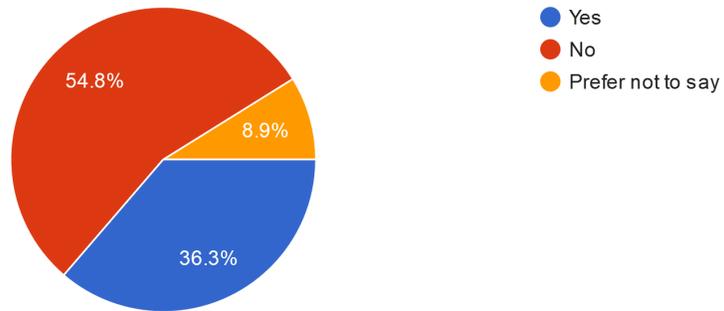
Do you identify as transgender?

361 responses



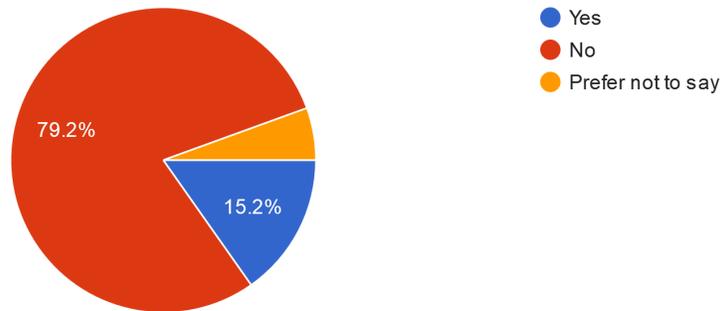
Are you or a member of your household a part of the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community?

361 responses



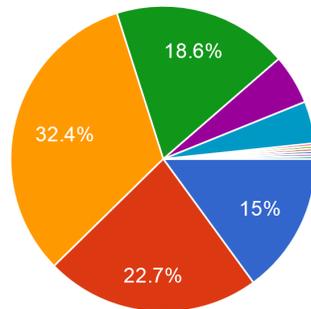
Do you identify as living with a disability?

361 responses



Which area of Ypsilanti do you currently reside in?

361 responses

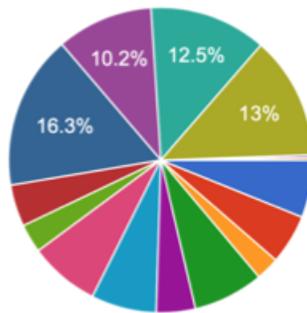


- Ward 1: See map below
- Ward 2: See map below
- Ward 3: See map below
- Ypsilanti Township
- Pittsfield Township
- Superior Township
- Ingham county
- Right outside of ward 1

▲ 1/2 ▼

Which of the following best describes your income in the past 12 months?

361 responses

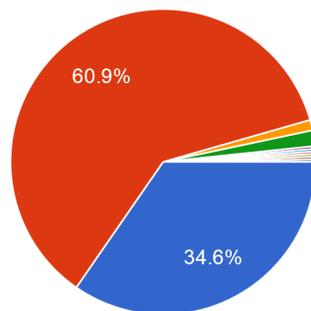


- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 - \$14,999
- \$15,000 - \$19,999
- \$20,000 - \$24,999
- \$25,000 - \$29,999
- \$30,000 - \$34,999
- \$35,000 - \$39,999
- \$40,000 - \$44,999
- \$45,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$74,999
- \$75,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 or more

Half of respondents

Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?

361 responses



- I rent my home
- I own my home
- I'm homeless (living on the streets, in...)
- I live with a parent/guardian
- Live with friend
- I want to take this survey without defin...
- Multigenerational living with matriarc...
- I rent apartment from Barnes and bar...

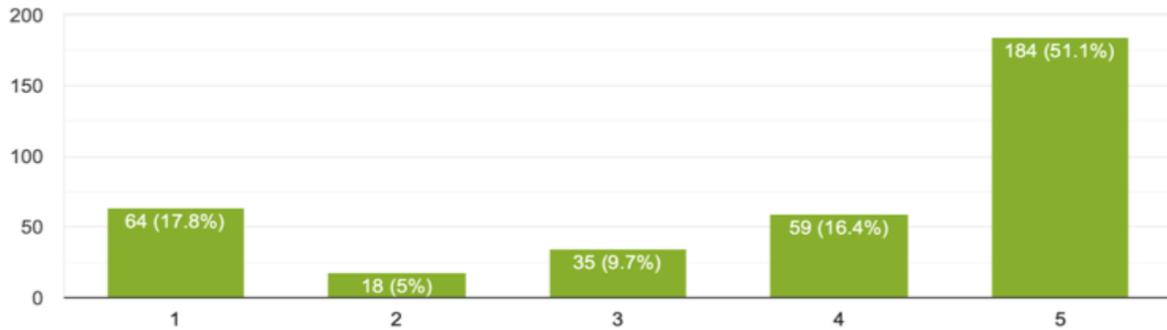
▲ 1/2 ▼

SECTION 1: RENTERS' RIGHTS

1. Protect renters from improper eviction

proposal rating:
360 responses

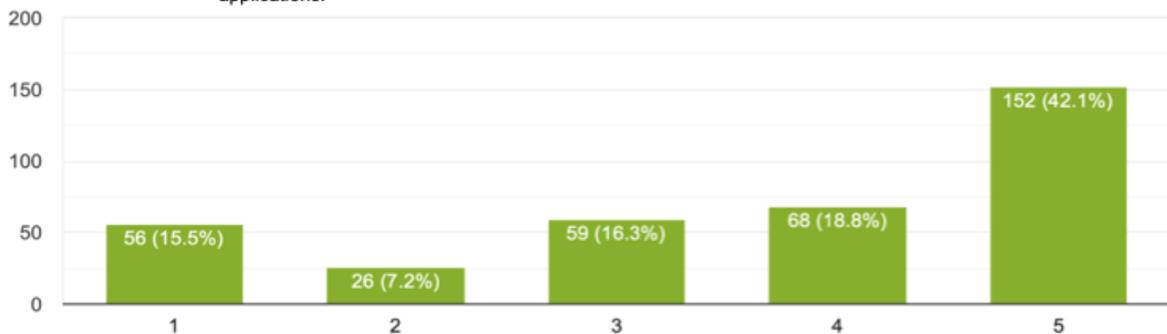
Proposal: Enact a 'Just Cause Eviction' ordinance to protect renters from eviction for an improper reason. Just Cause Eviction statutes protect tenants from wrongful eviction. They limit a landlord's ability to evict tenants to certain reasons, such as failure to pay rent or for violation of the lease terms.



2. Give renters with criminal records a fair chance

proposal rating:
361 responses

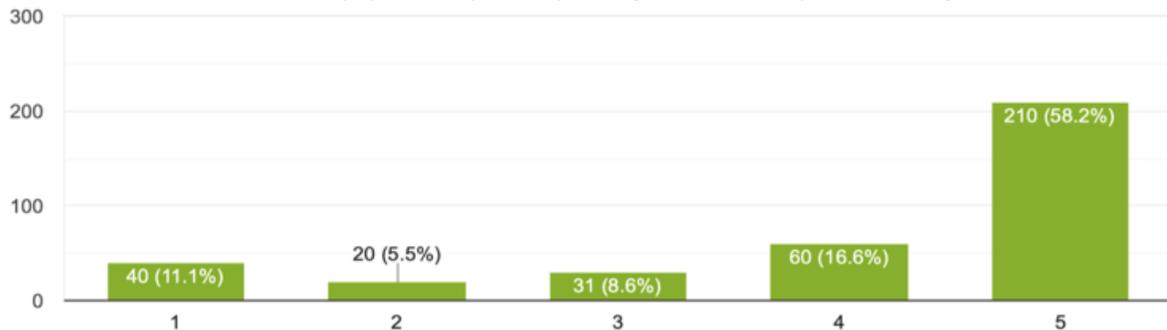
Proposal: Enact a 'Ban the Box'/'Fair Chance' ordinance to protect renters with criminal records by restricting landlords from asking about criminal history on rental applications. Detroit recently decided to Ban the Box in another category: housing. Under Detroit's new ordinance, landlords with portfolios of five or more units are no longer allowed to ask questions about criminal history on housing applications.



3. Give tenants right of first refusal

proposal rating:
361 responses

Proposal: Enact a 'Tenant Right of First Refusal' ordinance that will allow tenants to have a certain notice period and time to purchase their properties, should the owner wish to sell their units. Tenant Right of First Refusal can set in motion a process that transfers property ownership either to residents or to another entity willing to preserve the long-term affordability of the property. It has produced a number of resident-owned properties and partnerships among residents and nonprofits in Washington, DC.



Renters' rights: Priority ranking

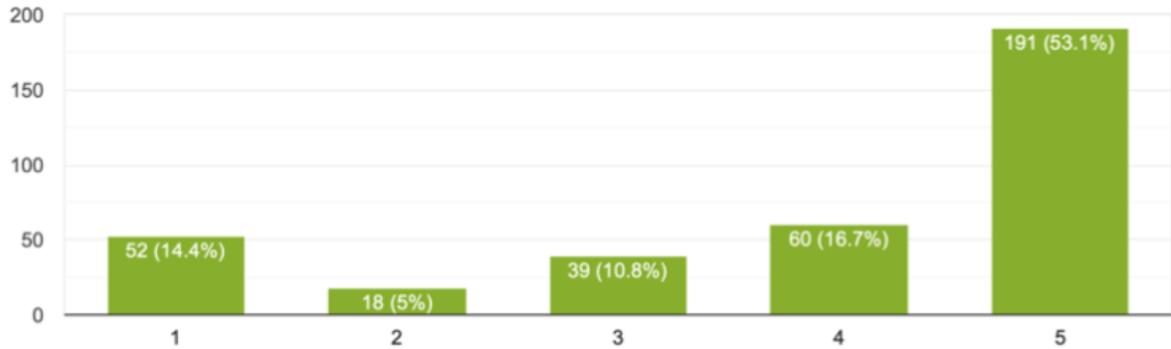
1. Protect against improper eviction (52.7% of respondents)
2. Give tenants right of first refusal to purchase properties (39.6% of respondents)
3. Give renters w/criminal records a fair chance (38.8% of respondents)

SECTION 2: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Build on public land

proposal rating:
360 responses

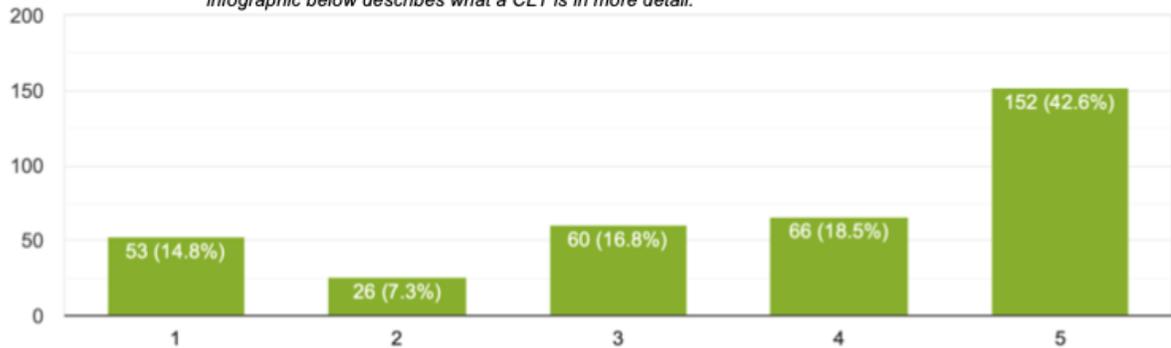
Proposal: *Prioritize using public land for public good—build affordable & accessible housing on the available public lands in the City of Ypsilanti (such as Water St. and 220 N Park). Other possible uses of public land for public good: incentivize construction of an affordable grocery store to address Ypsilanti's food desert, build a recreation center for resident youth and adults, or establish Community Land Trust (see below) on available public land.*



Establish a community land trust

proposal rating:
357 responses

Proposal: *Proposal: Establish a Community Land Trust (CLT) to promote long term housing affordability & accessibility through community control of land. CLTs are nonprofit, community-based organizations designed to ensure community stewardship of land. CLTs combine democratic ownership of land with private ownership of the structure on the land in order to maintain long term housing affordability. CLTs can be interspersed throughout a neighborhood, and can include rental homes and businesses. The infographic below describes what a CLT is in more detail.*

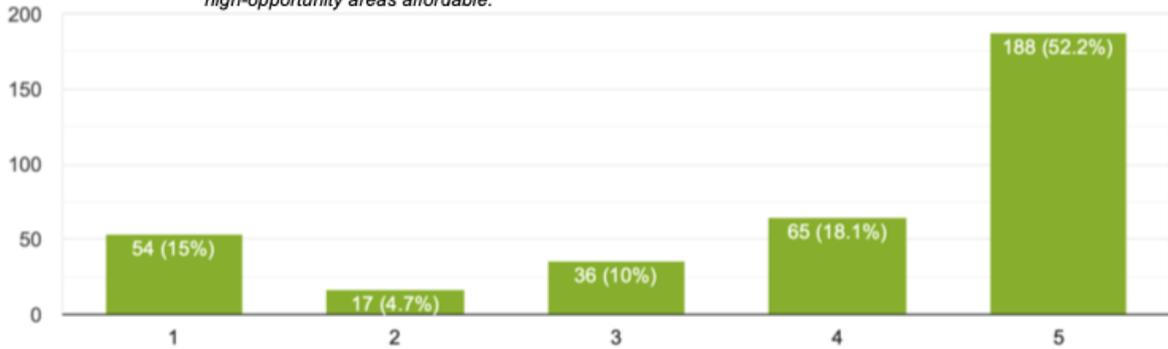


Enact an inclusionary housing ordinance

proposal rating:

360 responses

Proposal: Enact an Inclusionary Housing ordinance to require private developers include a certain percentage of units at below market rate. Inclusionary zoning requires (or incentivizes) private developers to designate a certain percentage of the units in a given project as below market rate. In D.C. and around the country, inclusionary housing is an increasingly popular way to produce affordable housing through the private market—it is one of the main tools cities have for maintaining neighborhood diversity, and keeping high-opportunity areas affordable.

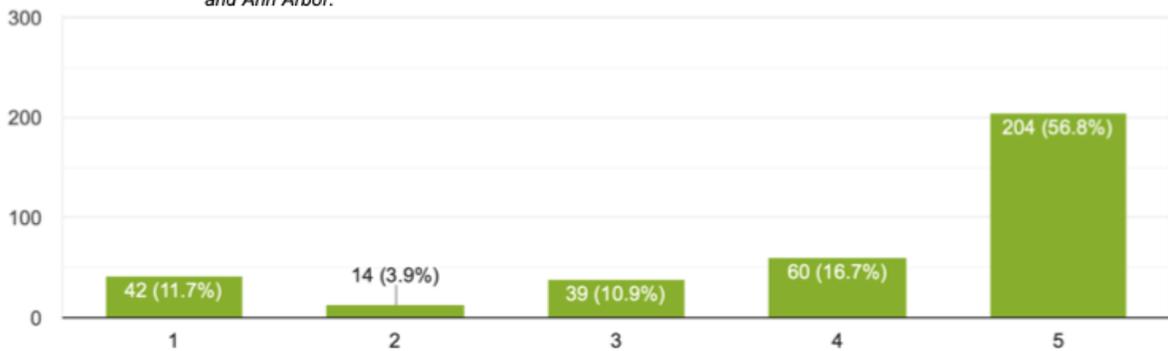


Enact an affordability & accessibility ordinance

proposal rating:

359 responses

Proposal: Enact an Affordability & Accessibility Ordinance to 1) Define the parameters for affordable & accessible housing based on Ypsilanti's Area Median Income (AMI) and 2) Require new housing developments to include a percentage of affordable and accessible units based on Ypsilanti's need. An Affordability Ordinance would enhance a future inclusionary housing policy by setting affordability rates based on Ypsilanti's AMI, thus acting in consideration of income disparity and segregation between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor.

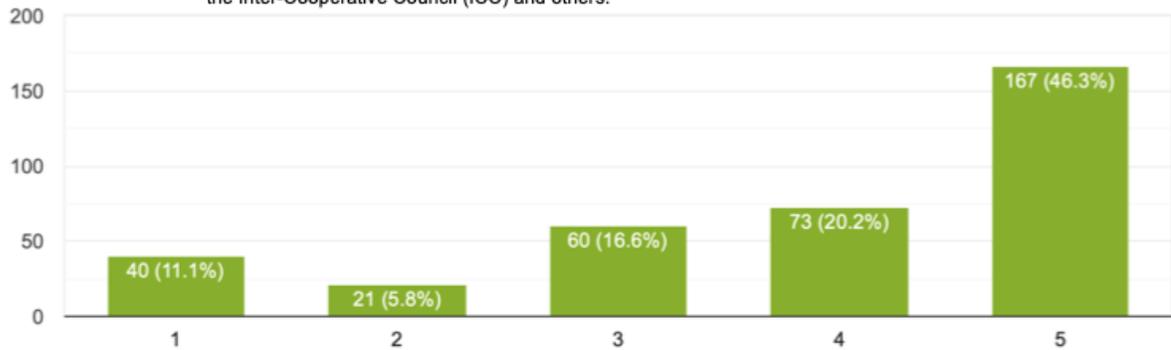


Incentivize co-op conversion

proposal rating:
361 responses

Proposal: Create a legal framework incentivizing co-operative housing conversion and assist tenants in the purchase of rental units for the purposes of creating affordable co-operative housing.

Cooperative housing is a type of home ownership—it is formed when people join on a democratic basis to own or control the housing and/or related community facilities in which they live. Co-operative housing usually includes an apartment building or buildings. Ann Arbor has many co-operative housing options via the Inter-Cooperative Council (ICC) and others.

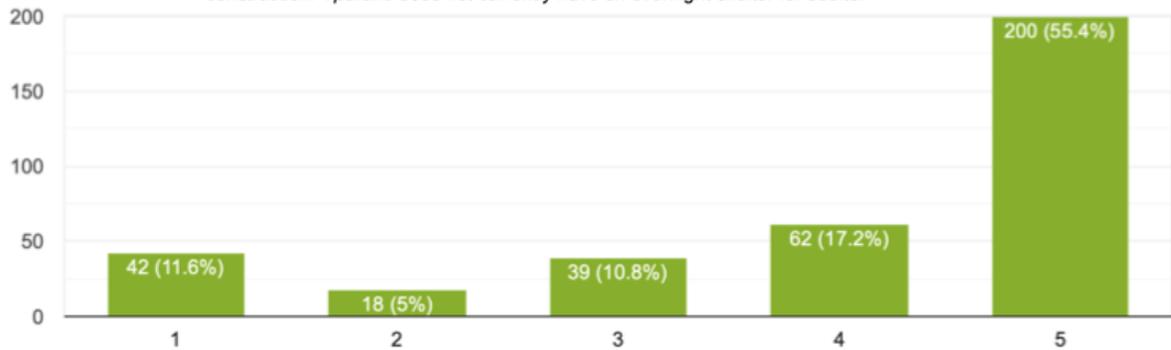


Build a homeless shelter in Ypsilanti

proposal rating:
361 responses

Proposal: Build a shelter in Ypsilanti to help meet needs of residents experiencing homelessness.

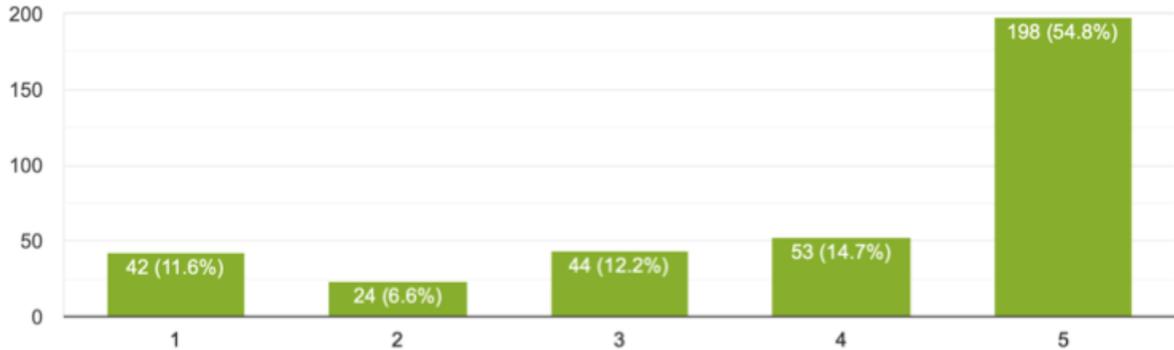
Ann Arbor's homeless shelter, The Delonis Center, has 50 resident beds this year (down from 77 beds in 2018) and is serving a significant percentage of people who identify their last address as being in Ypsilanti. At the same time, reports from Ypsilanti Community Schools and Eastern Michigan University show increased rates of student homelessness. A youth shelter, Ozone House, is currently under new construction. Ypsilanti does not currently have an overnight shelter for adults.



Install public toilets and benches in our parks

proposal rating:
361 responses

Proposal: Install high-quality public toilets and napping benches in our parks for the use of the general public, including residents experiencing homelessness. Ypsilanti also receives the Mental Health & Public Safety millage which could be used to fund projects like these and others that promote the health the safety of residents experiencing homelessness.



Sustainable development: Priority ranking

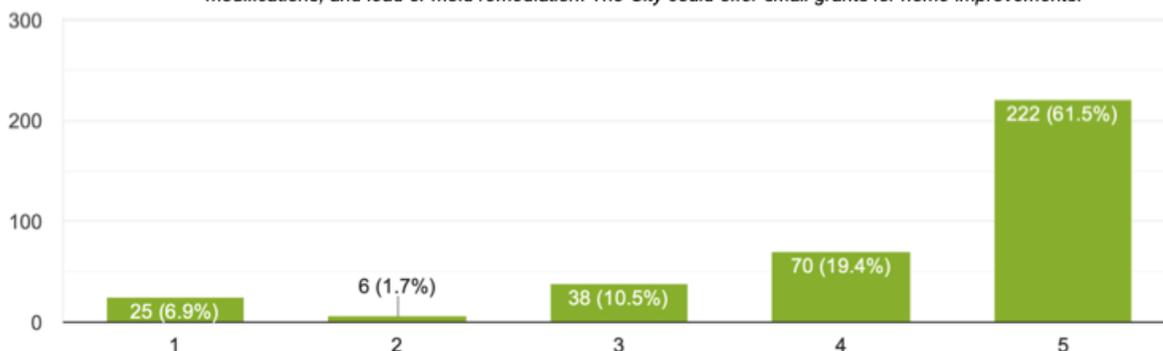
1. Enact an affordability & accessibility ordinance (44.9%)
2. Build a homeless shelter in Ypsilanti (39.9%)
3. Install public toilets and benches in our parks (35.9%)
4. Enact an inclusionary housing ordinance (32.7%)
5. Build on public land (28.9%)
6. Establish a community land trust (27.1%)
7. Incentivize co-op conversion (25.4%)

SECTION 3: NEED-BASED ASSISTANCE

1. Establish a minor home repair program

Proposal: Establish a Minor Home Repair Program to assist with the cost of essential home repairs for eligible low-income and disabled homeowners. Eligible repairs could include roof replacement, plumbing replacement, mechanical or electrical replacements, ADA ramp installation or repair, door modifications, and lead or mold remediation. The City could offer small grants for home improvements.

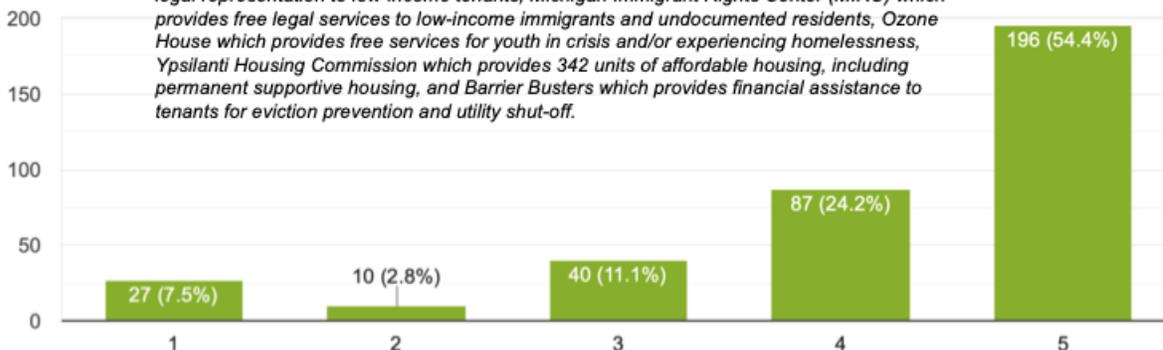
361 responses



2. Fund local agencies that provide need-based assistance

Proposal: Fund local agencies that provide need-based assistance to further expand services and programs to Ypsilanti residents. Agencies that provide need-based assistance include Legal Services of South Central Michigan (LSSCM) which provides free legal representation to low-income tenants, Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC) which provides free legal services to low-income immigrants and undocumented residents, Ozone House which provides free services for youth in crisis and/or experiencing homelessness, Ypsilanti Housing Commission which provides 342 units of affordable housing, including permanent supportive housing, and Barrier Busters which provides financial assistance to tenants for eviction prevention and utility shut-off.

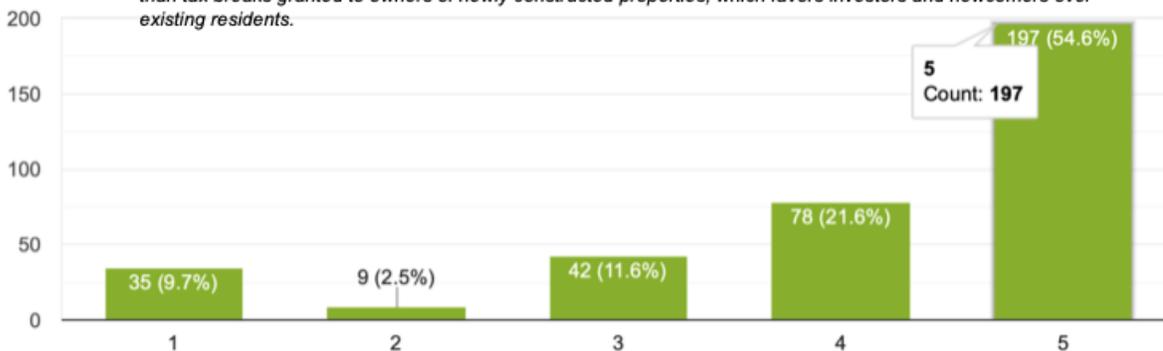
360 responses



3. Allow existing homeowners living South of Michigan Avenue to qualify for same incentives as new homebuyers

Proposal: Modify the policy for the South of Michigan Avenue Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ) to allow existing homeowners to qualify for the same tax breaks as new home-buyers. Under the current City of Ypsilanti NEZ policy, tax breaks granted to homeowners who rehabilitate existing properties are of shorter duration than tax breaks granted to owners of newly constructed properties, which favors investors and newcomers over existing residents.

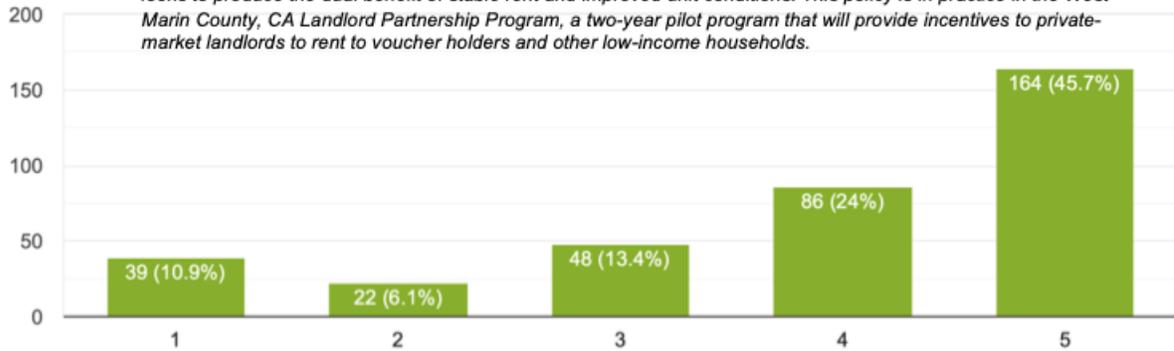
361 responses



4. Create a landlord incentive program to stabilize rent

359 responses

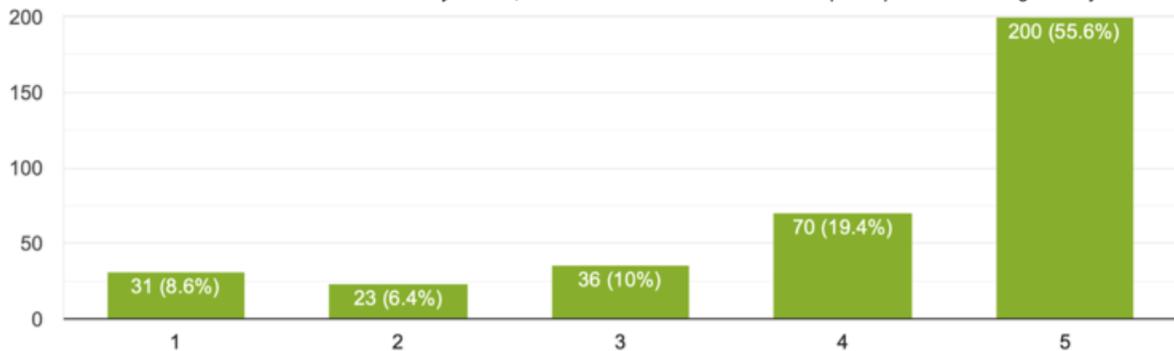
Proposal: Create a landlord incentive program to stabilize rent by offering tax abatement and/or funding for property improvements in exchange of keeping rent stable for a period of time. 70% of Ypsilanti households are renter households, and much of the housing stock in the rental market is older and in disrepair—this program looks to produce the dual benefit of stable rent and improved unit conditions. This policy is in practice in the West Marin County, CA Landlord Partnership Program, a two-year pilot program that will provide incentives to private-market landlords to rent to voucher holders and other low-income households.



5. Assist low-income residents with home buying

360 responses

Proposal: Assist low-income residents who wish to purchase a home by offering credit improvement services, and mortgage down-payment assistance. 70% of households in Ypsilanti are renter households—a significantly higher percentage to comparable college towns of its size. The city could provide assistance to low-income households who wish to buy homes, to reduce barriers to homeownership and promote housing stability.

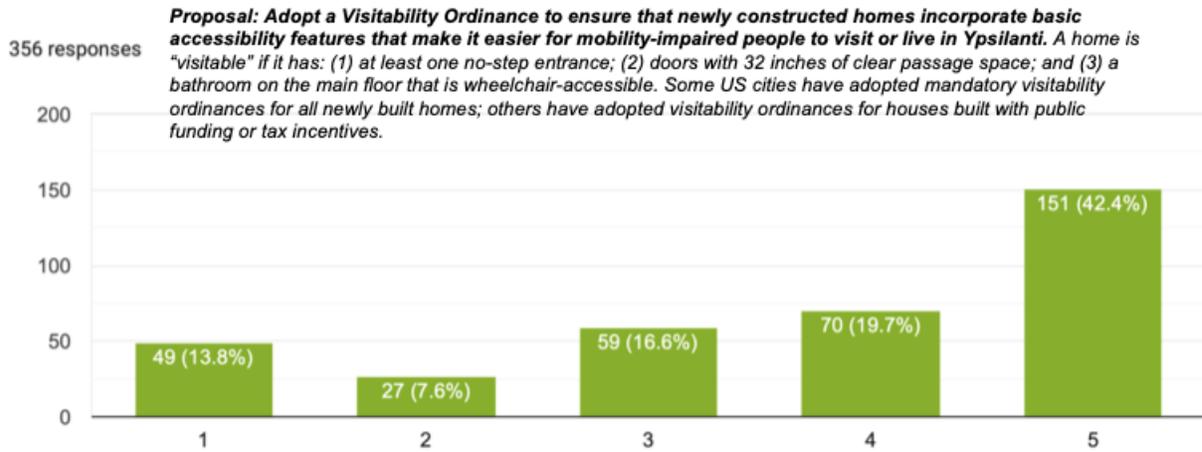


Need-based assistance: Priority ranking

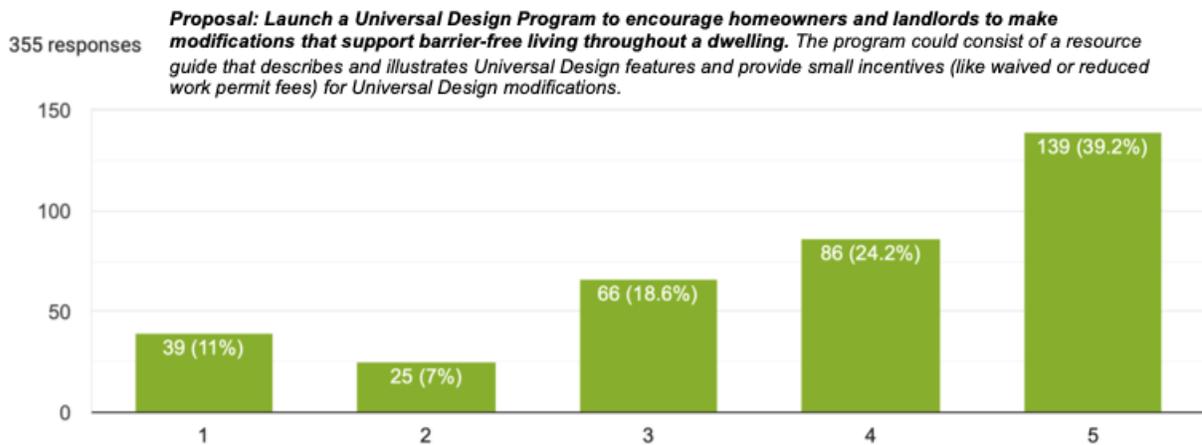
1. Assist low-income residents with home buying (49.1%)
2. Establish a minor home repair program (42.4%)
3. Create a landlord incentive program to stabilize rent (40.9%)
4. Fund local agencies that provide need-based assistance (39.2%)
5. Allow existing homeowners living South of Michigan Avenue to access the same incentives as new homebuyers (32.2%)

SECTION 4: PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

Adopt a visitability ordinance



Launch a universal design program



Physical accessibility: Priority ranking

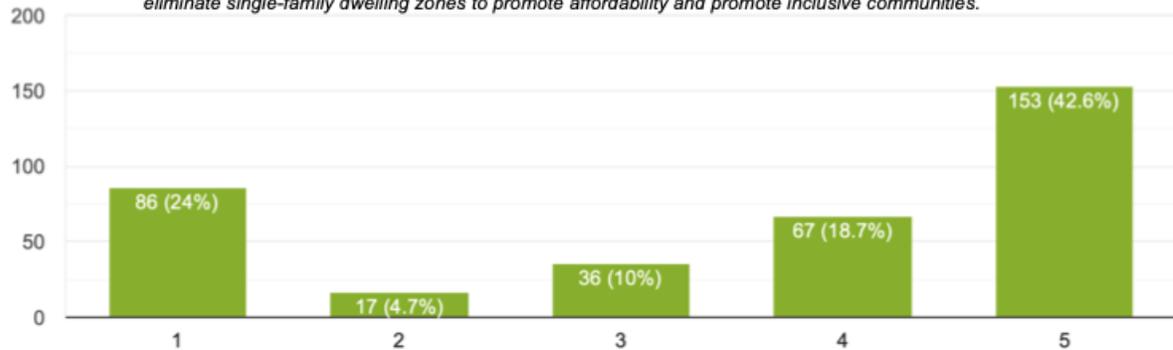
1. Launch a Universal Design program (60.4%)
2. Adopt a visitability ordinance (59.4%)

SECTION 5: ZONING

Change single-family zoning districts to allow 2- or 3-unit homes

Proposal: *Revise the Zoning Ordinance to allow duplexes or triplexes in the Single-Family Residential district to allow for the construction of housing that tends to be more affordable than detached single-family homes. Restriction of multiple family dwellings has historically been a part of race or class segregation strategies in some communities. Some municipalities (such as Minneapolis) have taken action to reduce or eliminate single-family dwelling zones to promote affordability and promote inclusive communities.*

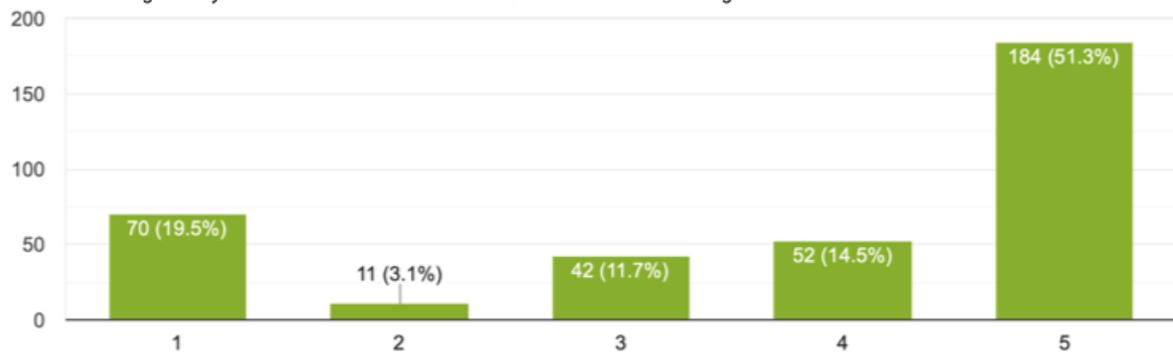
359 responses



Lift limit on non-related persons living in a single dwelling

Proposal: *Increase the number of unrelated individuals who may reside together in a dwelling by revising the Zoning Ordinance definition of a "family". The City of Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance definition of a "family" limits the number of unrelated individuals that may occupy a single dwelling to three. This limit can be increased generally or tied to the number of bedrooms available in that dwelling.*

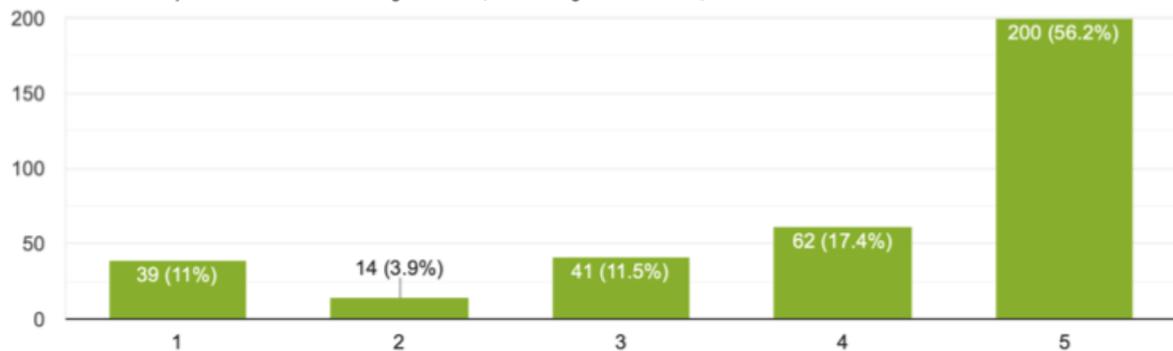
359 responses



Allow accessory dwelling units throughout the City

Proposal: *Revise the zoning ordinance to better accommodate affordable housing in small, independent residences known as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). ADUs can take the form of detached garages, backyard cottages, or basement/attic apartments located on the same lot as an existing residence. Currently ADUs are permitted in the Core Neighborhood, Core Neighborhood-Mid, and Historic Corridor zones.*

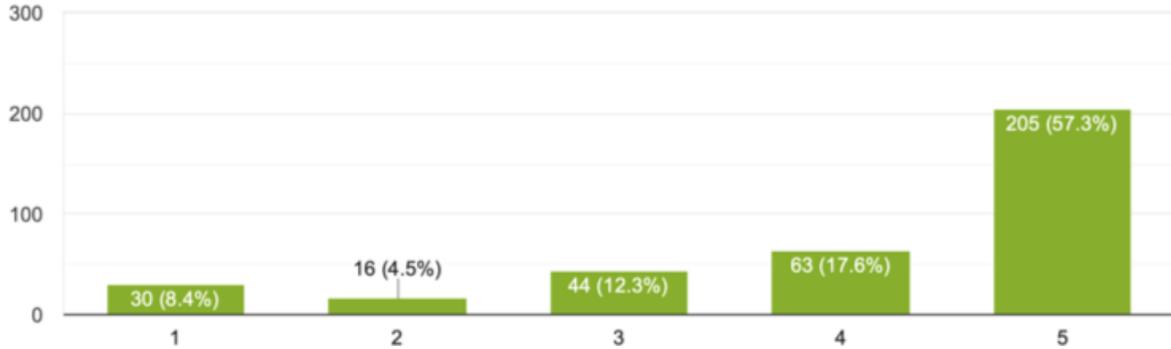
356 responses



Alter zoning ordinance to accommodate tiny homes

Proposal: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to remove barriers to tiny home construction and occupancy. Tiny homes can provide an affordable alternative to larger, traditional homes. They can come in a variety of styles, many of which are complicated by zoning requirements governing building frontage, lot coverage, and portability.

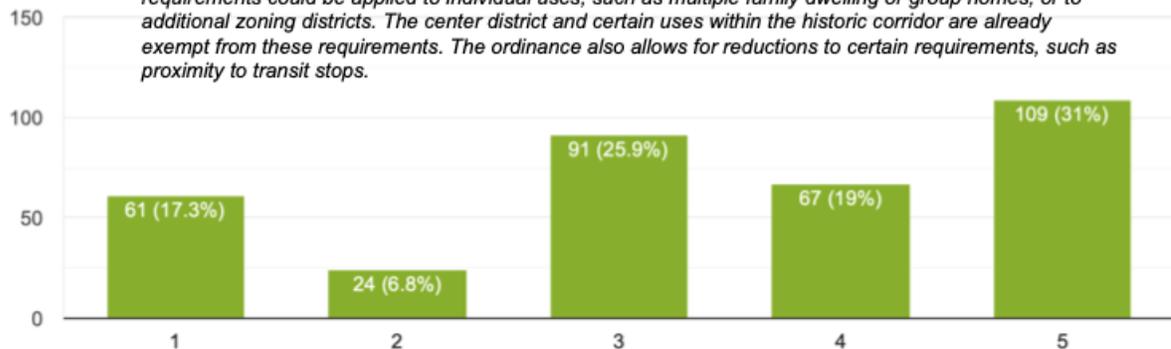
358 responses



Change parking space requirement for new housing developments

Proposal: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the number of parking spaces required for new housing development or altered housing. Reduction of parking requirements can lower the cost of construction or provide more site-layout options for new or altered housing. Reductions in parking space requirements could be applied to individual uses, such as multiple family dwelling or group homes, or to additional zoning districts. The center district and certain uses within the historic corridor are already exempt from these requirements. The ordinance also allows for reductions to certain requirements, such as proximity to transit stops.

352 responses

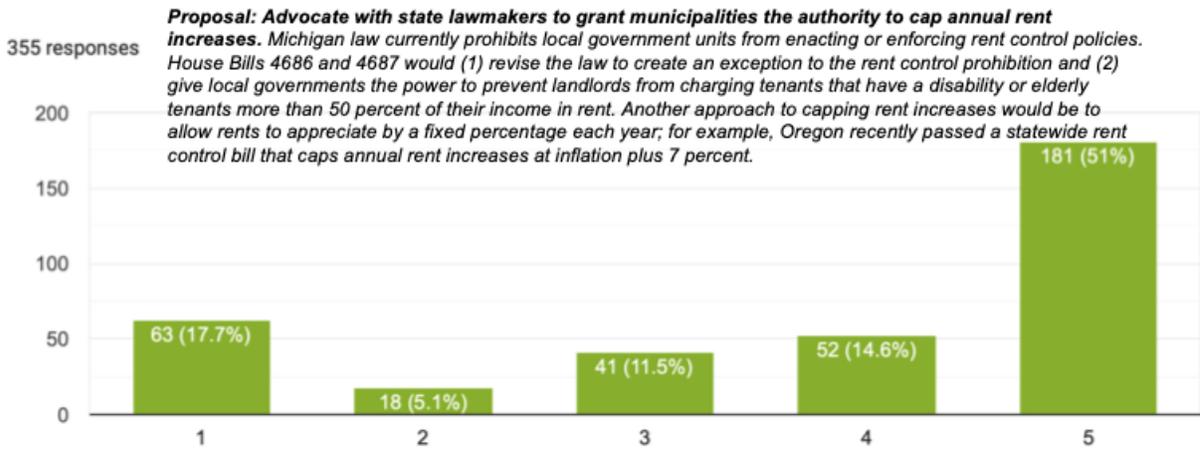


Zoning: Priority ranking

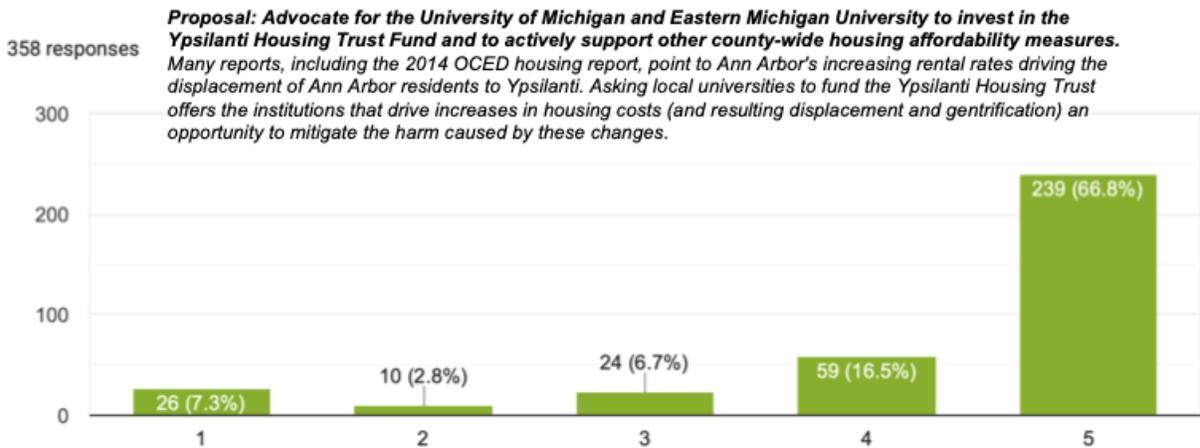
1. Alter zoning ordinance to accommodate tiny homes (52.3%)
2. Lift the limit on non-related persons living in a dwelling (44.6%)
3. Change single-family zoning districts to permit 2- or 3-unit homes (44%)
4. Allow accessory dwelling units throughout the City (39.1%)
5. Change parking space requirement for new housing developments (19%)

SECTION 6: PARTNERSHIP & ADVOCACY

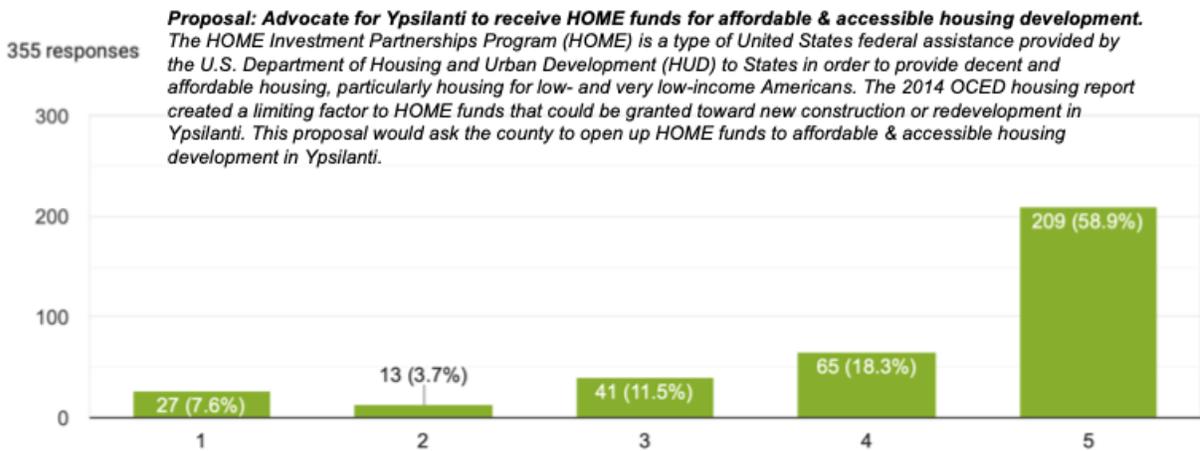
Advocate for rent control legislation



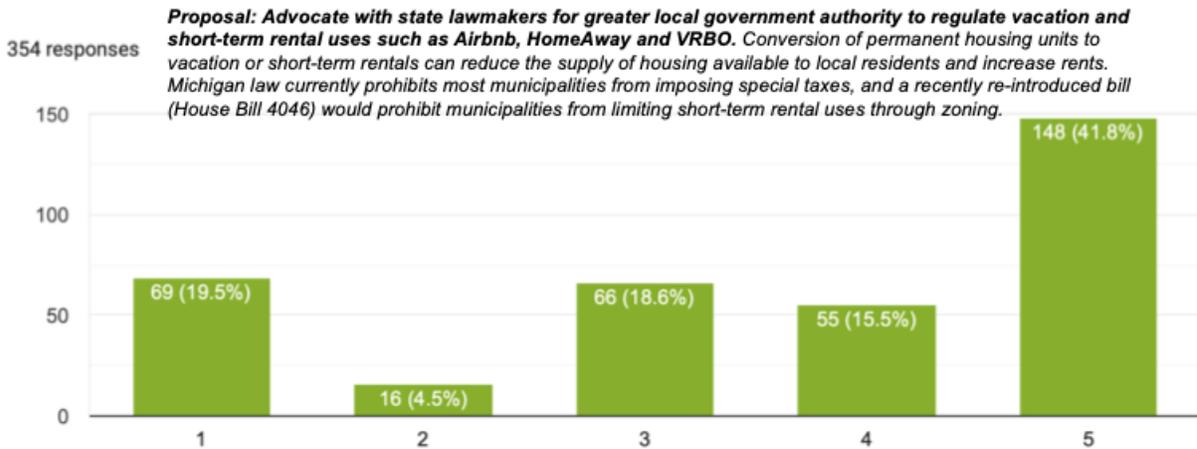
Ask local universities to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust



Ask OCED to fund affordable, accessible housing in Ypsilanti



Advocate for local authority to regulate Airbnb/short-term rentals



Partnership & Advocacy: Priority ranking

1. Ask local universities to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust (54.8%)
2. Advocate for rent control legislation at State level (54.2%)
3. Ask OCED to fund affordable and accessible housing in Ypsilanti (36.7%)
4. Advocate for local authority to regulate Airbnb/short-term rentals (28.2%)

Note on representativeness of survey respondents: Homeowners, white/caucasians, women, and able-bodied people were overrepresented in the survey as compared with census data. Renters, men, Black/African Americans and non-Black people of color, and people with disabilities were underrepresented.

Select comments from survey respondents: Certain themes cropped up in the comments section of the housing survey that advocate for expansion of proposals or alternatives. Zoning, rental stock, accessibility, taxes, and subsidized housing were commented on in particular.

“Multi family zoning has huge economic benefits, and increases accessibility significantly. Progressive cities like Minneapolis have made this move. Ypsilanti could lead and do the same for our community.”

“Ypsilanti has entirely too much rental stock. We need to incentivize single-family homeownership.”

“Re: a homeless shelter in Ypsi, I am wary because other programs have been proven more effective:
1. Supportive Housing for chronically homeless (cheaper and more effective at keeping people housed and out of jail/ER than shelter, Avalon Housing does this work)

2. Dispersed Shelter/ Rapid Rehousing for families and individuals who are not chronically homeless (E.g. this is their first time experiencing homelessness due to a lost job, domestic violence, etc. No history of mental illness, addiction or other "chronically homeless" factors. A lot of homeless people, especially families, fit into this category)."

"There are actually two family shelters in Ypsilanti ran by SOS Community Services, as well as Rapid Rehousing. We know this is not enough to meet the need. The shelters only serve 1 family at a time (a total of 20 families with 70 children per year). "

"At SOS we have noticed a great need for drop-in services like showers and laundry, which I think would be an awesome asset to Ypsi."

"The other thing is that Meals on Wheels has launched an "Aging in place" Home Repair program recently. I would love to see the city support this venture, rather than do their own thing."

"The senior population is ever growing. Affordable senior housing needs priority attention too."
"I advocate for the city to include in their master plan that housing is a human right! Rent control! CLTs! Co-op Conversion! These are so important."

"Right of first refusal and co-op conversions are excellent, but are best accompanied by a means to guarantee financing for any tenants or employees who want to purchase the property and establish a co-op. Right of first refusal is only as good as your ability to buy."

"My strategy: Lower property taxes in City of Ypsilanti."

"There are a *lot more* types of disabilities than just being in a wheelchair!!! The only way you're defining accessibility is through wheelchair access, which is important, but accessibility is greater than that for sure."

Notice of Amendment

Proposed amendment to *The Rules of Procedure and Bylaws of the Planning Commission of the City of Ypsilanti, Michigan as adopted April 17, 2019.*

Article III - Membership, Section 4. to be amended as follows:

Section 4. Each member of the Commission shall avoid conflicts of interest, including, but not limited to, deliberating on, voting on, or reviewing a case concerning the member; the immediate family or household of the member; property owned by or neighboring property owned by the member; or a corporation or partnership in which the member has an ownership, employment, or other financial interest; or when there is a reasonable appearance of a conflict of interest.

For the purposes of this section, a neighboring property shall include any property falling within the 300' notification radius described by Section 103 of the Zoning Act.

Potential conflicts of interest should be identified by the member prior to deliberation of the case. Members shall disclose, except where it violates a confidence, the general nature of the conflict, and the minutes shall so record the conflict and abstention. ~~The member shall remove themselves from the meeting room during deliberation of the case.~~ The member with the conflict of interest may choose to remain in the meeting room, but must abstain from commenting and communicating during the case and its deliberation. Written comments may be transmitted to the Chair and/or City Planner by the member before the meeting, and may be read aloud by the Chair.

Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 22, 2020, 7:00pm – Teleconference Meeting

1. Call to order – The meeting was brought to order at 7:03pm by teleconference. Committee members attending were Jenny Connolly, Renee Echols, Bob Krzewinski, Sarah Walsh, and Jared Walfish. Also attending were Mike Davis (City Planning Commission), Jared Talaga (City Planning Commission) City Public Services Department Project Manager Bonnie Wessler, City Planner Andy Aamodt, and City Clerk Andrew Hellenga.
2. Introductions - Audience participation - Public input - None
3. Guest presentations – None
4. General business
 - a. Agenda approval – Offered By: Committee member Connolly; Seconded By: Committee Member Walsh. Approved: Yes – 5; No – 0.
 - b. Approval of March meeting minutes - Offered By: Committee member Walsh; Seconded By: Committee member Walfish. Approved: Yes – 5; No – 0.
 - c. Bylaws review and Committee status – Bob Krzewinski reported Committee member Lee Stimpson resigned on June 10, 2020, Jared Talaga’s term ended May 31, 2020 but will still be assisting the Committee, Mike Davis will be taking the place of Jared Talaga as Planning Commission liaison to the Committee (to be formally approved at the next Planning Commission meeting) and Renee Echols who’s nomination to serve on the Committee was approved by the Planning Commission at its June 17, 2020 meeting. Also City resident Diana Gonzalez is interested in serving on the Committee pending Planning Commission approval).
 - d. Proposed Committee by-laws change – Quorum needed for meetings – After discussion, a motion was made by Committee member Krzewinski; Seconded by Committee member Connolly to amend the Committee bylaws to add item 2.d to read “A quorum shall consist of a majority of the current Committee members”. Approved: Yes – 5; No – 0. This bylaws addition will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for their approval.
5. Old & continuing business
 - a. 2020 Committee priorities
 1. City Non-Motorized Plan – Committee members will meet with Bonnie Wessler and Jared Talaga in July to work towards a final draft of the Plan Update to be presented to the Committee at its next meeting. Bob Krzewinski will survey possible meeting times.
 2. Sidewalk curb cut inventory & improvements
 - Curb Cut Priority List – Draft list of recommended curb cuts discussed with any further recommendations or revisions to Bob Krzewinski by Friday, June 26th at noon as the list will be forwarded to City Public Services Department that afternoon.
 3. Pedestrian Improvements – (Signage, road markings, permanent radar speed signs at select locations, Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon, traffic calming. Concentrate on where most pedestrian activity occurs)
 - Continue current efforts with MDOT on in-City State Route pedestrian improvements (i.e. Huron, West Cross, Washtenaw, Hamilton, Michigan). Bonnie Wessler reported Huron/Hamilton/Washtenaw rebuilding with non-motorized improvements (including the bridge on Huron over I-94) on track for 2022 construction by the Michigan Department of Transportation.
 - Install permanent (i.e. solar powered) radar speed signs at locations with a high incidence of speeding (i.e. southbound Prospect south of Holmes, Mansfield both directions near schools) – No new updates.
 4. Bike Lanes
 - Spring repainting of existing bike lanes - No new updates.

5. Communication & Education
 - Publish quarterly Non-Motorized Committee newsletter – Summer edition to be published in July.
 - Review City Council, Planning Commission, Sustainability Commission agendas for possible Committee input at their meetings – Continues to be done by Bob Krzewinski
 - Spring/summer safety education program for both motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists – Bob Krzewinski will work on publicizing motorists giving cyclists 3 feet of clearance.
 - Sidewalk/Curb Cut vegetation (summer) snow removal (winter) promotion by Committee – Facebook/Nextdoor social media posts to neighborhood groups from Committee urging summer trim-backs of sidewalk vegetation.
6. Non-Motorized City budget – Determine yearly, non-motorized project funding amount available. Committee involvement in CIP review and non-motorized project funding disbursement decisions. - No new updates.
7. Neighborhood Connectors - Low-speed street which has been "optimized" for bicycle & walking traffic. Potential projects: Adams (Cross to Forest), Pearl (Hamilton to Mansfield), 2nd Avenue (Michigan to Watling). Mike Davis and Bob Krzewinski will do some bicycle scouting trips over the next month of possible Connector routes. A map of a potential Ypsilanti Neighborhood Connector routing is at https://drive.google.com/open?id=18-2nSj-R_T2goLtaSWfzF6Alyza1yv7&usp=sharing
8. Border To Border (B2B) Trail gap completion and enhancement.
 - Support City and Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission efforts to complete the Trail through the City – Groundbreaking event was held the afternoon for June 22 with construction starting by the end of June.
 - Install “State Law – Stop For Pedestrians In Crosswalk” signs at mid-block B2B Trail crossing of Cornell Street between Collegewood and Mayhew - No new update.
9. Bike & Walk Friendly Communities
 - Submit Walk Friendly Community application when Non-Motorized Plan update complete
 - Bike Friendly Community (BFC) award recertification (current BFC award expires in November 2021) – At the next meeting action should start taking place to form a subcommittee to reapply in November 2021. Bike Friendly Community application information is at <https://bikeleague.org/content/about-bfc-application-process> (click on “Returning Applicants” for background information). For the actual application download (in Word) visit https://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/BFC_Application_Fall_2020.docx
 - Bike Friendly Business program drive – No new updates.
10. Events & Community Outreach – EMU August 1st Bike Rodeo, Parkridge Festival. Seek grants for helmet giveaways for events the Committee is at. - EMU Bike Rodeo is Saturday, August 1st, 9am to noon at Gene Butman Ford, 2105 Washtenaw Avenue. Bob Krzewinski will have a Committee table at the Bike Rodeo and additional volunteers would be helpful. Parkridge Festival in late August is cancelled due to the pandemic in 2020. Grants for helmets at outreach events still needed.
11. Safe Routes To School – Group reorganizing in the Ypsilanti area.
 - b. Parkridge, Frog Island, Senior Center bike repair stations – Bonnie Wessler ordered these racks through a City grant. EMU looking at donating the existing bike repair station at the old College of Business downtown and moving it to either the AAATA Transit Center or the downtown Library.
 - c. Pedestrian Crossing Legislation – Michigan HB 4738 (Representative Ronnie Peterson) – No new action on this legislation since June 20, 2019. Unless approved, legislation will die when the current Michigan legislature adjourns by the end of 2020.
 - d. Other – Bonnie Wessler is looking at the possibility of creating some short term demonstration projects in the City and was gauging interest from the Committee. Both Renee Echols and Bob Krzewinski were interested. Bob Krzewinski mentioned Chelsea is involved in such a project now (<http://www.miwats.org/watsblog/2020/6/19/a-tactical-urbanism-demonstration-project>).

6. New Business

- a. Planning - Public Services Departments update – Seasonal speed bumps are being installed in mid to late June due to pandemic staffing problems earlier in the year at Public Services.
 - b. Bonnie Wessler is looking at the possibility of creating some short term demonstration projects in the City and was gauging interest from the Committee. Both Renee Echols and Bob Krzewinski were interested. Bob Krzewinski mentioned Chelsea is involved in such a project now (<http://www.miwats.org/watsblog/2020/6/19/a-tactical-urbanism-demonstration-project>).
7. Other Items – Announcements – Next meeting – Going back to the traditional meeting date (1st Thursday) would involve a meeting close to July 4th when many will be out of town. With that in mind the next scheduled meeting will be Thursday, August 6, 7pm.
8. Adjournment - Offered By: Committee member Connolly; Seconded By: Committee Member Walfish. Approved: Yes – 4; No – 0. Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

City Of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee
Draft - June 2020 Curb Cut Recommendations

1. S. Grove and Spring – <https://goo.gl/maps/4EdmqztHFrECX1Cy7> - <https://goo.gl/maps/cynRqeWHdAEcrHMx9> (Streetview SE) - <https://goo.gl/maps/QbzECXTNCzNKNKN57> (Streetview NE)
 - Primary problem: Non-ADA compliant on northeast and southeast sides of intersection. New ADA compliant ramps are planned for the northwest/northeast sides of the intersection in conjunction with Border To Border Trail construction.
2. Bellevue between Roosevelt and Whittier - <https://goo.gl/maps/7sKU4qG1zmkv2fJM9> (Streetview)
 - Primary problem: Curb cut on west side of Bellevue between Roosevelt & Whittier (sidewalk travels from Bellevue west to Hewitt)
 - Secondary problems: No curb cut on east side of Bellevue between Roosevelt & Whittier. Also recommend construction to fill sidewalk gap on east side of Bellevue between Roosevelt & Whittier
3. Collegewood and North Mansfield - <https://goo.gl/maps/jLeXzwShGHAU7XCm9>
 - Primary problem: No curb cuts on northwest and northeast sides of intersection
 - Secondary problem: Existing curb cuts on southwest & southeast sides of intersection in poor shape
4. Chidister and Spring – <https://goo.gl/maps/VTcbQj8fTT1ASxMj8> - <https://goo.gl/maps/mxezLKnCHeB8Hn9Q7> (Streetview)
 - Primary problem: Non-ADA compliant on north side of Spring
5. Catherine and Spring - <https://goo.gl/maps/qYsVQP4muhgZBTFY6> - <https://goo.gl/maps/eAoHZidSyzE8QwSH9> (Streetview)
 - Primary problem: Non-ADA compliant on north side of Spring
6. Casler and Spring - <https://goo.gl/maps/VkscmaDegsCBppbbA> - <https://goo.gl/maps/BydvqxZPykVBwe7Y6> (Streetview)
 - Primary problem: Non-ADA compliant on north side of Spring
 - Secondary problem: Utility pole obstructs sidewalk on north side of Spring, west of Casler
7. Bell and Spring - <https://goo.gl/maps/RoG5nvgEeZV4Q5d99>
 - Primary problem: Non-ADA compliant on north side of Spring
8. Second and Jefferson - <https://goo.gl/maps/tuLfU9vWzRwXHqA37> - <https://goo.gl/maps/skZoZFv1E26YW7NB9> (Streetview)
 - Primary problem: Curb cut needed on west side of Second to connect housing area through opening in fence with Jefferson
9. Second and Madison - <https://goo.gl/maps/E55trWdzeNzAisoY8> (Streetview)
 - Primary problem: ADA curb cuts needed on east side of Second
10. Second and Small Place - <https://goo.gl/maps/Mro3FmVFtXGpuEKo6>
 - Primary problem: Curb cuts needed to cross Second from Small Place sidewalks
11. Second and Frederick - <https://goo.gl/maps/rD75jWiGD5EW3qCY8>
 - Primary problem: Curb cuts needed to cross Second from Frederick
12. Pearl at Adams - <https://goo.gl/maps/gs6xgwz4xyGoeKoWA> (Streetview looking south)
 - Primary problem: SE corner doesn't have bumps or color changes

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

BIKE RODEO



FREE EVENT! | SAT. AUG. 1, 2020
9 A.M.- 12 P.M. | GENE BUTMAN FORD
2105 WASHTENAW AVENUE

FREE SAFETY CHECK

- Mechanical check
- Helmet fitting

FREE STUFF

- Child helmet giveaway

FUN TIMES

- Rules of the road
- Practice skills
- Learn to bike safely
- Food and drinks will be provided



EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Office of Admissions



Agenda
Planning Commission - Virtual Meeting
Wednesday, 15 July 2020 – 7:00 P.M.

Please be advised that due to COVID-19, City Hall will not be open to the public. This meeting will be held electronically on a video conferencing application in accordance with Governor Whitmer's Executive Order. The access code is posted in the Public Notice on www.cityofypsilanti.com and attached in the packet. The public may choose to participate during Audience Participation or the Public Hearing through the video conferencing application, or may submit e-mailed comments to aaamodt@cityofypsilanti.com by 4 pm, July 15.

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

Matt Dunwoodie, Chair	P	A
Jared Talaga, Vice-Chair	P	A
Eric Bettis	P	A
Michael Borsellino	P	A
Mike Davis Jr.	P	A
Jessica Donnelly	P	A
Phil Hollifield	P	A
Heidi Jugenitz	P	A
Michael Simmons	P	A

III. Approval of Minutes

- June 17, 2020 Meeting

IV. Audience Participation

Open for general public comment to Planning Commission on items for which a public hearing is not scheduled. Please limit to five minutes.

V. Presentations and Public Hearing Items

- Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment: Medical marijuana provisioning centers and recreational marijuana retailers as a special land use in Neighborhood Corridor zoning districts.
 - Public Hearing

VI. Old Business

VII. New Business

- Master Plan: Draft Update
 - Housing Affordability and Accessibility Committee Report and Recommendations
- Draft Bylaws Amendment

VIII. Future Business Discussion / Updates

IX. Committee Reports

- Non-Motorized Committee Report
 - Planning Commission Representative
- Housing Affordability and Accessibility Committee Report

X. Adjournment



**PUBLIC NOTICE
CITY OF YPSILANTI
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING – VIRTUAL MEETING**

The Ypsilanti Planning Commission will hold a virtual meeting on Wednesday, July 15, 2020 at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held in accordance with Governor Whitmer's Executive Order 2020-129.

The Planning Commission meeting is being held virtually in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The meeting can be attended through the below link, or through the below toll free numbers.

July 15, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Virtual Access Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81114114429>

When prompted, enter **Meeting ID:** 811 1411 4429

July 15, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Toll Free Phone Number Access

877 853 5257 US Toll-free
888 475 4499 US Toll-free

When prompted, enter the **Meeting ID:** 811 1411 4429, followed by the #, press # again to be connected.

The public will be able to make comment during *Audience Participation* or the *Public Hearing*. To address the Planning Commission, meeting participants will need to "raise their hand" to indicate they want to speak.

To raise your hand while participating online, click the "Raise Hand" icon at the bottom of the Zoom Screen or press *9 via phone. After you raise your hand you will be informed when it is your turn to speak, and your microphone will be unmuted at that time. Your microphone will be muted again when you have finished your comments or when your speaking time has expired.

Instructions for Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities who need accommodations to effectively participate in the meeting should contact the City Clerk, Andrew Hellenga at ahellenga@cityofypsilanti.com by 5:00 p.m. on the day before the meeting to request assistance. Closed Captions will be provided during the meeting.

City Clerk's Office
One South Huron Street
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197
(734) 483-1100

Andrew Hellenga
City Clerk
Posted: July 9, 2020

MEETING MINUTES
Planning Commission
Wednesday, 17 June 2020 – 7:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting

Please be advised that due to COVID-19, City Hall will not be open to the public. This meeting will be held electronically on a video conferencing application in accordance with Governor Whitmer's Executive Order. The access code is posted in the Public Notice on www.cityofypsilanti.com and attached in the packet. The public may choose to participate during Audience Participation or the Public Hearing through the video conferencing application, or may submit e-mailed comments to aaamodt@cityofypsilanti.com by 4 pm, June 17.

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

Matt Dunwoodie, Chair	P
Jared Talaga, Vice-Chair	P
Eric Bettis	P
Michael Borsellino	P
Mike Davis Jr.	P
Jessica Donnelly	P
Phil Hollifield	P
Heidi Jugenitz	P
Michael Simmons	A

III. Approval of Minutes

- May 20, 2020 Meeting
Motion to approve.
Offered By: Commissioner Hollifield; Seconded By: Commissioner Davis Jr.
Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)

IV. Audience Participation

Open for general public comment to Planning Commission on items for which a public hearing is not scheduled. Please limit to five minutes.

Motion to open audience participation.

Offered By: Commissioner Hollifield; Seconded By: Commissioner Donnelly
Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)

Two residents spoke during Audience Participation.

Motion to close audience participation.

Offered By: Commissioner Hollifield; Seconded By: Commissioner Donnelly.
Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)

V. Presentations and Public Hearing Items

- Limited Site Plan Review: Marihuana Retailer, 50 Ecorse Rd.

Staff presentation by City Planner Andy Aamodt.

This was a tabled case from May 6th, 2020. The applicant and the architect sat down and provided staff with a new, consistent site plan.

Proposed changes for sidewalk including ramps. Pedestrian entry markers from the sidewalks. They proposed resurfacing and striping of the lot.

The fence will be repaired, and landscaping will not be removed.

Staff recommends approval of the limited site plan.

Applicant: Jim Garmo, Property owner of 50 Ecorse – Do we need a ramp for every curb? If someone comes from the bus or McDonalds, there would be a ramp to get to the stores. We did not provide a ramp at the other locations, because you would end up in the street.

Commissioner Talaga pointed out that there is a potential of connectivity of the sidewalk in the future, and would like to see the other sidewalk entries.

Commissioner Donnelly agreed that if a curb cut was being made at one entry, then all three entries should have a curb cut.

*Motion that the Planning Commission **approve** the Limited Site Plan for the Capital Solutions Ypsilanti, LLC (Green Vitality) existing facility at 50 Ecorse Rd. with the following findings:*

Findings

1. The application substantially complies with §122-310.

2. The existing building and site design are nonconforming under §122-352.

Conditions

1. The applicant must provide wheelchair accessible curb cuts at all three sidewalk entries on the site.

Offered By: Commissioner Talaga; Seconded By: Commissioner Donnelly.

Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)

VI. Old Business n/a

VII. New Business

- Election of Officers

Motion to approve Matt Dunwoodie as Chair of the commission.

Offered By: Commissioner Talaga; Seconded By: Commissioner Davis Jr.

Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)

Motion to approve Jared Talaga as Vice-Chair of the commission.

Offered By: Commissioner Dunwoodie; Seconded By: Commissioner Hollifield

Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)

Commissioner Talaga volunteered to continue serving on the ZBA

- Bylaws Discussion

Andy Aamodt shared conflict of interest policies in other cities.

Commissioner Jugenitz wants to see any policy on conflict of interest to be consistent.

Commissioner Dunwoodie agreed that having to leave the room during a presentation sets up the commissioner to be the only City resident not allowed to view the presentation.

Consensus on allowing commissioners with a conflict of interest to stay in the room during a presentation, providing written comment before a meeting but prohibiting comment during public comment, and leaving the room during the deliberation and vote.

Andy Aamodt will work on a draft of the change that can be brought back for a vote.

VIII. Future Business Discussion / Updates n/a

IX. Committee Reports

- Non-Motorized Committee Report
 - Approval of Members
Bob Krzewinski of the Non-Motorized Committee recommends Renee Echols for the committee.
Jared Talaga asked the commission for someone to take his place in the committee as a PC representative. Mike Davis Jr. volunteered to take the role.

Motion to approve Renee Echols for the Non-Motorized Committee.

**Offered By: Commissioner Donnelly; Seconded By: Commissioner Jugenitz
Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)**

- Master Plan: Housing Affordability and Access Committee Report
 - Executive Summary and Survey Findings
Commissioner Jugenitz updated the commission about the committee work. There will be dedicated time for a full presentation at next months meeting. Executive summary of the report is in this packet. There are also survey results in todays packet, along with strategies. She urges commissioners to read these materials before the next meeting.
Commissioner Donnelly asked about the legality of rent control in Ypsilanti. The committee will likely recommend the city advocate for rent control legislation at the state level.
The commission discussed the integration of reports into the upcoming master plan.

X. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

**Offered By: Commissioner Hollifield; Seconded By: Commissioner Donnelly
Approved: Yes – 8; No – 0; Absent – 1 (Simmons)**



July 15, 2020

**Text Amendment Staff Review
Marijuana Facilities in Neighborhood Corridor**

GENERAL INFORMATION

Applicant: Crown V LLP

Action Requested: Applicant requests zoning text amendment to Chapter 122: Article IV, Division 3, Subdivision III (§122-451). Text amendment would make medical marijuana provisioning centers and recreational marijuana retailers permissible as a special land use in Neighborhood Corridor zoning districts.

SUMMARY

Neighborhood Corridors (NC) zoning districts do not currently allow for medical marijuana provisioning centers or recreational marijuana retailers. This text amendment would make such uses permissible as special land uses, where applications for special use permits may be reviewed by Planning Commission on a case-by-case basis.

Figures 1 and 2: Captures of existing §122-451 Permissible Uses chart

Medical or dental clinics, less than 10,000 square feet	P	P	P		
Medical or dental clinics, 10,000 square feet or more	S	S	P		
Medical Marijuana Provisioning Centers	--	--	S		Section 122-537
Veterinary hospitals and clinics	--	S	S		Section 122-558
Kennels, commercial	--	--	S		Section 122-535

Firearms Sales Establishments	--	--	S		Section 122-527
Designated consumption establishment	--	--	S		Section 122-522
Recreational marijuana retailer	--	--	S		Section 122-550
RESTAURANTS					
Carry-out and/or delivery restaurant	--	P	P		
Café or coffee shop	P	P	P		

Zoning text amendments are reviewed by Planning Commission, who then gives a recommendation to City Council. The recommendation is made via motion, and also involves a report that will be transmitted to City Council. City Council has the ultimate authority to adopt the text amendment.

BACKGROUND

The existing zoning regulations pertaining to recreational marijuana were adopted by City Council in January of this year.

The applicant is applying because of recreational marijuana retailer interest at their property, 121 E. Michigan Ave. However, this application is not for a rezoning, rather a text amendment, so all of NC should be considered.

Medical marijuana provisioning centers and recreational marijuana retailers' regulations are mirrored in terms of zoning district allowed, level of approval, and distances from each other. Both uses must also be located at least 500 feet away from one another. They were meant to mirror each other because the state defines these as equivalent license types. A licensed medical marijuana provisioning center may be licensed as a recreational marijuana retailer, and vice versa. Most, if not all of the City's seven medical marijuana provisioning centers have applied to become permitted as a recreational marijuana retailer, too. Therefore, amending regulations of one should mean amending regulations of both; they are essentially a package deal.

For the purpose of this staff report, medical marijuana provisioning centers and recreational marijuana retailers will be grouped together and known as "subject facilities" throughout this staff report.

Figure 3: Where and How Subject Facilities are Permitted

<i>P=Principal, A=Accessory, S=Special Land Use, -- = Not Permitted</i>					
USES	C	NC	GC	NOTES	SPECIFIC REGULATIONS
Medical marijuana provisioning center	P	--	S		Section 122-537
Recreational marijuana retailer	P	--	S		Section 122-550

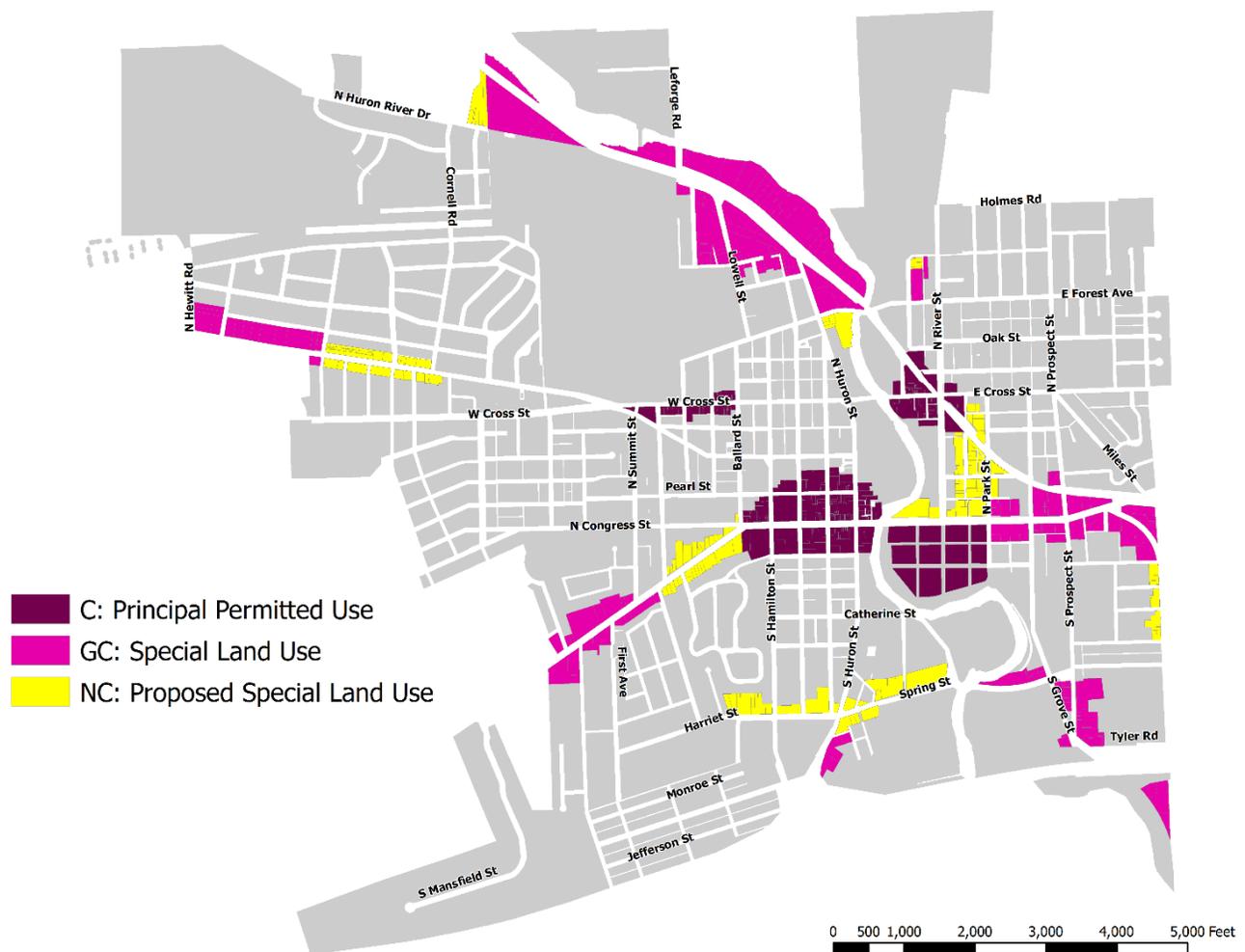
DISCUSSION

Through prior medical and recreational marijuana zoning regulations, the City has restricted uses to certain zoning districts and imposed certain buffer regulations. With this in mind, it has never been the City’s intent to allow marijuana everywhere, rather in appropriate zoning districts with buffers that prevent clustering of facilities. Staff recommends keeping the 500 feet buffer requirement from one subject facility to another subject facility.

Neighborhood Corridors are rather mixed-use zoning districts that entertain a range of uses. More intense special land uses in NC are: wholesale or distribution facility (gross floor area of less than 16,000 square feet); automobile filling stations without repair; bars; and food stores with the sale of alcohol (less than 15,000 square feet). There are a handful of liquor stores (classified as *food stores with the sale of alcohol*) within NC zoning districts.

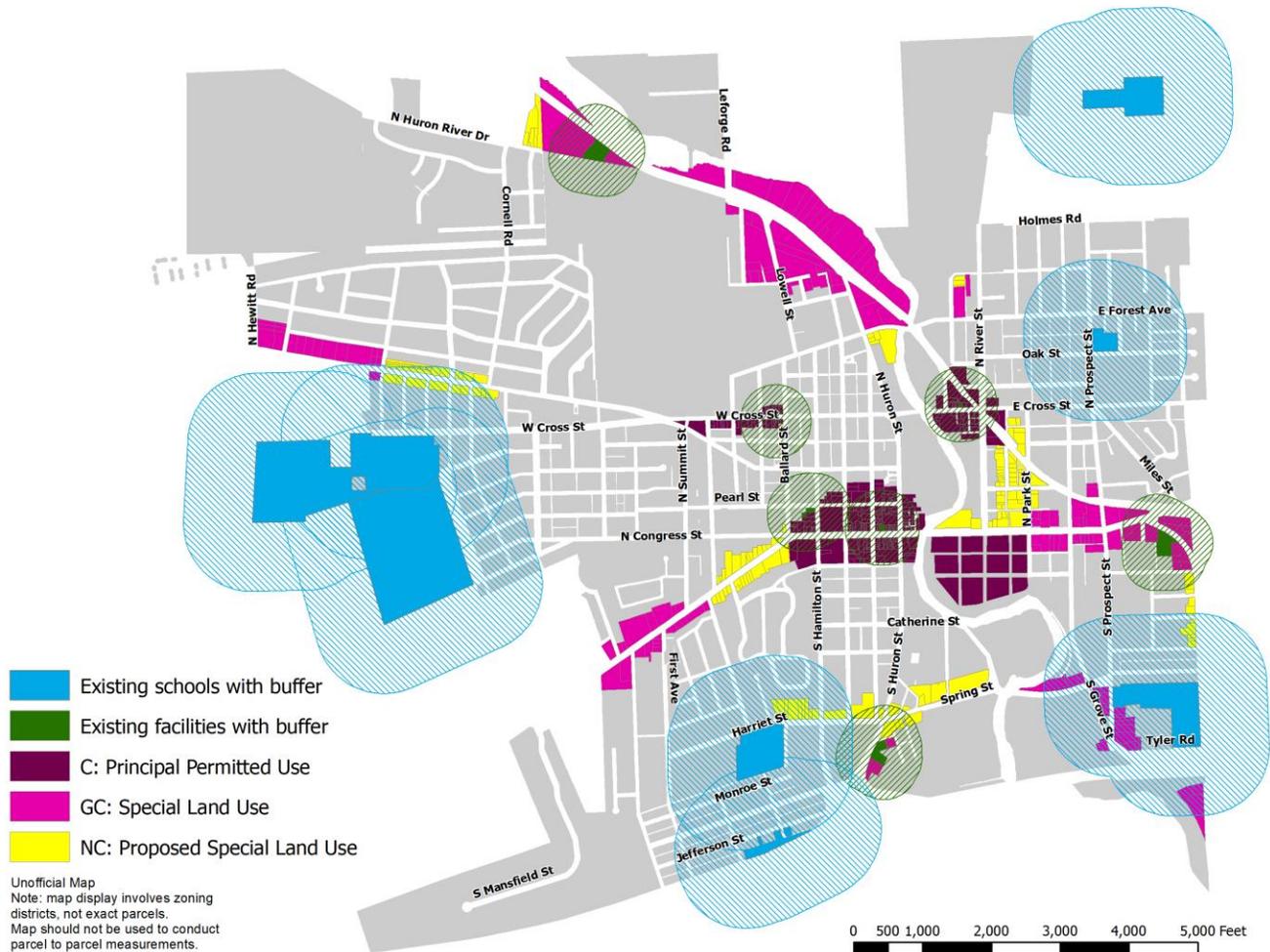
Considering the geographic location of NC zoning districts, these are often areas that link Center (C) and General Corridor (GC) zoning districts. See Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Map of Relevant Zoning Districts



Relating to required 500 feet buffers from one subject facility to the next, and 1,000 feet buffers from schools, see Figure 5 below. The school buffer substantially imposes on the potential NC properties on Harriet St. and Washtenaw Ave., leaving E. Michigan Ave. and the N. Park area, as well as E. Michigan Ave. as the primary potential areas for this amendment. Additionally, small areas at N. Huron and Forest, N. Huron River Drive, Spring St. area, and Emerick St. would open up as potential areas too.

Figure 5: Potential Locations of Subject Facilities



Additionally, as a *Walkable Urban District*, Neighborhood Corridor zoning districts do not just regulate the use involved, but the building type as well. That means the use is not solely important; how the use is physically developed into a building and a site is just as important. NC districts generally have smaller lot sizes than their GC relatives and have more dense surrounding neighborhoods, yet have a minimum base parking requirement unlike their Center counterparts (granted, the zoning ordinance does provide for parking reductions and Planning Commission may waive requirements in some instances). Therefore, staff believes it is sensible to limit the building size, and require a 5,000 square foot maximum gross floor area for the subject facility. Some other uses, including food stores, business and professional offices, auto repair, and medical or dental clinics, to name a few, have a maximum square footage in NC districts.

Using an existing facility, Oz Cannabis at 19 N. Hamilton, as an example- this would be an appropriately-sized example for a potential facility in NC. The building's footprint is approximately 4,000 square feet, so assuming just a singular floor would be used for provisioning center or retailer purposes, this would comply with a 5,000 square feet maximum. From a form-based standpoint, this facility would fit well into NC areas. See Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Example of a Preferred-Sized Facility



STANDARDS FOR AMENDMENTS

§122-362(a)

(a) Text Amendment. For a change to the text of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Commission shall consider and the City Council may consider, whether the proposed amendment meets the following standards:

(1) The proposed amendment is consistent with the guiding values of the Master Plan; and Applicable guiding values of the Master Plan include:

- *Diversity is our strength:* This maintains and potentially improves the diversity of the mix of businesses in Ypsilanti.
- *Ypsilanti is sustainable:* this action maintains, and has the potential to create, job opportunities for Ypsilantians.

- *Great place to do business, especially green and creative:* This action retains and fosters the growth of local businesses.

(2) The rezoning is consistent with description and purpose of the proposed district; and

The amendment will be consistent with what Neighborhood Corridor zoning districts already provide for. It is safe to say there are more intense uses already allowed in NC in terms of use, but also in terms of hours of operations, noise, disposal of waste, etc. As stated in §122-450, the intent of NC is to be a corridor that is "mixed-use" and "commercial" located "along the arteries of the City, such as Washtenaw, Huron, Hamilton, Michigan, Harriet, and River."

(3) The proposed amendment is consistent with the intent of this Zoning Ordinance; and

The amendment will be consistent with the intent of the zoning ordinance. Per §122-100, the intent of the ordinance is to promote the public health, safety, and welfare. In particular, to:

- create a safe, diverse, and sustainable city;
- guide the location of places of residence, recreation, industry, trade, service, and other uses of land;
- ensure that uses of the land shall be situated in appropriate locations and relationships;
- limit the inappropriate overcrowding of land and congestion of population and transportation systems and other public facilities.

(4) The proposed amendment will enhance the functionality, transportation network or character of the future development in the City; and

Staff does not anticipate that this amendment will have an impact on the functionality or transportation network in the City. However, marijuana uses have the potential to re-use traditionally vacant or distressed buildings in the City.

(5) The proposed amendment will preserve the historic nature of the surrounding area and of the City; and

Staff does not anticipate that this amendment will negatively affect the historic nature of the City.

(6) The proposed amendment will enhance the natural features and environmental sustainability of the City; and

Staff does not anticipate that this amendment will negatively affect the natural features or environmental sustainability of the City.

(7) The proposed amendment will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public; or

Staff does not anticipate that this amendment will negatively affect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public.

(8) The proposed amendment is needed to correct an error or omission in the original text; or

This amendment does not correct an error.

(9) The proposed amendment will address a community need in physical or economic conditions or development practices; and

Staff anticipates this change may provide for the potential re-use of properties, activating properties for tax capture and improving property values.

(10) The proposed amendment will not result in the creation of significant nonconformities in the City.

The proposed amendment will not result in a significant creation of nonconformities.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission recommend **approval** of the proposed text amendment to Chapter 122: Article IV, Division 3, Subdivision III (§122-451). with the following condition and findings:

Condition:

- The proposed text amendment be revised as follows:
 - Medical marijuana provisioning centers, less than 5,000 square feet of gross floor area permissible as a special land use in Neighborhood Corridor
 - Recreational marijuana retailer, less than 5,000 square feet of gross floor area permissible as a special land use in Neighborhood Corridor

Findings:

1. The proposed amendment is consistent with the guiding values of the Master Plan;
2. The rezoning is consistent with description and purpose of the proposed district;
3. The proposed amendment is consistent with the intent of this Zoning Ordinance;
4. The proposed amendment will enhance the character of the future development in the City;
5. The proposed amendment will address a community need in physical or economic conditions or development practices.

Andy Aamodt
City Planner, City of Ypsilanti

c.c. File



Memo

To: Planning Commissioners
From: Andy Aamodt, City Planner
Date: July 15, 2020
Subject: Drafted Master Plan Update

BACKGROUND

The Shape Ypsilanti Master Plan was adopted in 2013. In 2018, Planning Commission decided an update to the Master Plan ("the Plan") was necessary. The City chose Beckett & Raeder, Inc. as planning consultants for this update. Intent to plan notices were sent in June of 2019.

Two large themes arose and became the topic of current Master Plan planning efforts: sustainability, and housing affordability/accessibility. These themes are currently being worked on. The sustainability aspect will be a whole new chapter in the plan. The Sustainability Commission has reviewed a draft of the proposed Sustainability Chapter but has not yet approved a draft yet. The Housing Affordability and Accessibility Committee has performed surveys and drafted an executive summary but has not yet finalized a report. These two large themes will continue to be planned for, and when ready, will also be added and incorporated into the Master Plan. If their timelines run concurrently, these can both be part of an update we might call "Update B."

On top of the aforementioned themes, the City chose to conduct a general update as well, with a few smaller themes such as accessory dwellings, transportation updates, and potential redevelopment sites. This draft update addresses these smaller themes, and a general update of statistics, maps, and figures. This is the update before Planning Commission at the moment, an update we might call "Update A."

UPDATE "A" DETAILS

Because this is an update, not a new plan, this document will have original 2013 text combined with new text. For the most part, the new text is displayed in **purple**. This is especially the case in chapters 4-9 which underwent the most substantial updating. *Chapter 3 – Ypsilanti Now* was largely updated too, but because it is a chapter with extensive population and demographic statistics, new text or statistics are not highlighted in purple.

As part of this update we (City staff) attempted to track what plans and policy we have done, and what we have not done, by marking “completed” or “ongoing” next to their individual headers.

A few new plans/policy sections have been added. These sections include: a re-survey of the Historic District (Chapter 7), opportunities for accessory dwelling units (Chapter 7), Bell-Kramer land uses (Chapter 7), and the potential redevelopment sites of 220 N. Park and 1901 Huron River Drive (Chapter 10).

NEXT STEPS

Once Planning Commission recommends City Council distribution of this Master Plan update, this will be placed on a City Council agenda. City Council will then make the decision on distribution. The Plan will have a distribution period of 63 days, where the public and different agencies may submit comment. Then, after the 63 day window, Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the update. Planning Commission may then choose to adopt the Plan. If City Council asserts the right to adopt the Master Plan update, via resolution, then City Council is the ultimate adopting authority. See the attached *Master Plan Adoption Process* flowchart by Beckett & Raeder, Inc. for reference.

In the coming months, Planning Commission may also see “Update B,” which will go through the same process.

Note: the original Shape Ypsilanti Master Plan can be found [here](#).

MASTER PLAN ADOPTION PROCESS

Per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008

B R 
Beckett&Raeder

1 Planning Commission Initiates Update

The Planning Commission is the author of the master plan. It must review the master plan every 5 years and then decide whether to begin the process of amending the existing plan or adopting a new plan. The review findings must be recorded in the Planning Commission meeting minutes [MCL 125.3845(2)].

2 Intent to Plan Notifications

BRI sends out Intent to Plan notifications via first class mail, inviting comment from recipients. Notifications go to all entities listed in [MCL 125.3839(2)] including: neighboring municipalities; regional and county planning commissions; public utility, railroad, and public transportation agencies; county road commissions, and the state transportation department.

3 Plan Submittal to Elected Body

After preparing the master plan, the Planning Commission submits a request (via a motion) to the elected body for distribution of the proposed master plan to the same entities initially contacted for the Intent to Plan notifications [MCL 125.3841(1)].

4 Distribution Approval

The elected body approves distribution of the proposed master plan (via formal resolution) for public and agency review, which sets the clock for the comment period: 63 days for a new plan or plan update [MCL 125.3841(3)] or 42 days for a minor plan amendment [MCL 125.3845 (1)(b)].

5 Master Plan Distribution

BRI sends the proposed master plan by first class mail, personal delivery, or electronic delivery for public and agency review [MCL 125.3841(2)].

6 Review & Comment Period

All entities that received notification may submit comments during the comment period. It is best practice to make the plan available for public review during this period [MCL 125.3841(3)].

7 Public Hearing & Notice

The Planning Commission holds a public hearing on the proposed master plan at the end of the comment period. At least 15 days prior, the Planning Commission must give notice of the time and place of the public hearing to the general public via newspaper publication and to the entities that received a copy of the proposed master plan amendment [MCL 125.3843(1)].

8 Planning Commission Master Plan Approval

The Planning Commission approves the master plan by resolution, with affirmative votes from at least 2/3 of its members for a city or village and a majority of its members for a township or county. [MCL 125.3843(2)]. Planning Commission approval of the proposed master plan is the final step in the adoption process, unless the elected body has asserted the right to approve or reject the master plan (see step 9). If this is the case, the Planning Commission recommends that the elected body adopts the plan [MCL 125.3843(3)].

9 Optional: Elected Body Master Plan Approval

An elected body may, by resolution, assert the right to approve or reject the proposed master plan (the municipality's clerk is responsible for maintaining a record of resolutions). If this is the case, then the elected body adopts the master plan by resolution. [MCL 125.3843(3)].

June 24, 2019

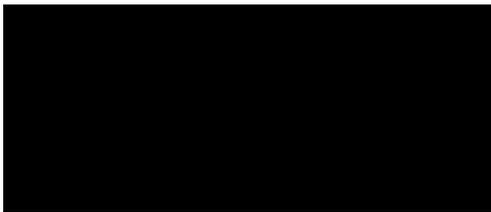
Regarding: Ypsilanti Master Plan

To whom it may concern:

This letter is to provide notification to your office that the City of Ypsilanti will begin the process of writing a Master Plan pursuant to Public Act 33 of 2008, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

Once a draft plan is approved for distribution, you will be provided a link to an electronic copy for your organization's review and comment. Please feel free to contact me about any land use or community development issues pertinent to your organization, or to the participating community, which should be reviewed during the preparation of the plan.

Regards,



John Iacoangeli, AICP, PCP, LEED AP, CNU-A



Enclosure: List of organizations and entities receiving this notification

Notification of Intent to Prepare a Master Plan

Organizations and Entities Receiving this Notice:

Ypsilanti Charter Township
Superior Township
Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
Washtenaw County
Washtenaw County Road Commission
Ypsilanti Community Schools
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti District Library
Michigan Department of Transportation
Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority
Norfolk Southern Corporation
Amtrak Corporation
DTE Energy Company
AT&T
Comcast Corporation
Ypsilanti Community Utilities
Consolidated Railroad
Washtenaw Area Transportation Study
SBC Communications

FIGURES & MAPS LIST

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19	Map 2: City of Ypsilanti Median Age, 2017	Pending	
21	Map 3: Percent Minority	Complete	Added
21	Map 4: Percent Bachelors Degree or Higher	Complete	Added
21	Map 5: Per Capita Income	Complete	Added
22	Map 6: Rental & Owner Occupied Housing, 2019	Complete	Added
22	Figure 4: Housing Tenure for University Towns	Complete	Added
24	Map 7: Housing Units by Type, 2019	Complete	Added
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33	Figure 8: Change Number of Employees in Washtenaw County	Complete	Added
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44	Figure 12: Intersections and Mode Share Data for Select Ypsilanti Intersections	Complete	Added
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84	Map 15: Corridors Map for City of Ypsilanti	Complete	Added
88	Figure 20: Corridors Implementation Matrix	Complete	Added
90	Map 16: Districts Map for City of Ypsilanti	Complete	Added
93	Figure 21: Districts Implementation Matrix	Complete	Added
96	Figure 22: Water Street Concept Plan	Existing	Added

98	Figure 23: Water Street "A" and "B" Streets	Existing	Added
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99	Figure 25: Driveway Apron Example	Existing	Added
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100	Figure 27: Water Street "B" Street Cross Section	Existing	Added
102	Figure 28: Bay Logistics Concept Plan	Existing	Added
104	Figure 29: Angstrom Property Concept Plan	Existing	Added
108	Figure 30: Zoning Plan	Existing	Added

SHAPE YPSILANTI

Title Page

To be formatted during new formatting/design.

DRAFT

DRAFT

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Acknowledgements

A special thanks to all who gave their time, energy and input to make this plan possible, especially

SHAPE YPSILANTI STEERING COMMITTEE

Rod Johnson, Planning Commission Chair
Richard Murphy, Planning Commission Vice-Chair
Phil Hollifield, Planning Commissioner
Pete Murdock, City Council Member, Ward 3
Ricky Jefferson, City Council Member, Ward 1
Anne Stevenson, Historic District Commission, Ward 2
D'Real Graham, Recreation Commission
Leigh Greden, EMU Administration, DDA Chair & Eastern Leaders' Group
Co-Chair
Bee Roll, Owner of beezy's cafe
Teresa Gillotti, City Planner at City of Ypsilanti
Desmond Miller, EMU student & Student Council President

YPSILANTI CITY COUNCIL

Paul Schreiber, Mayor
Lois Richardson, Mayor Pro-Tem, Ward 1
Ricky Jefferson, Ward 1
Susan Moeller, Ward 2
Daniel Vogt, Ward 2
Peter Murdock, Ward 3
Brian Robb, Ward 3

CITY OF YPSILANTI PLANNING COMMISSION

Rod Johnson, Chair
Richard Murphy, Vice-Chair
Mark Bullard
Phil Hollifield
Kelly Weger
Gary Clark
Brett Lenart
Cherly Zuellig
Daniel Lautenbach
Anthony Bedogne
Heidi Jugenitz

CITY STAFF

Ralph Lange, City Manager
Nan Schuette, Executive Secretary
Teresa Gillotti, Planner II
Bonnie Wessler, Planner I
Emily Baxter, Planning Assistant

ALL WHO PARTICIPATED

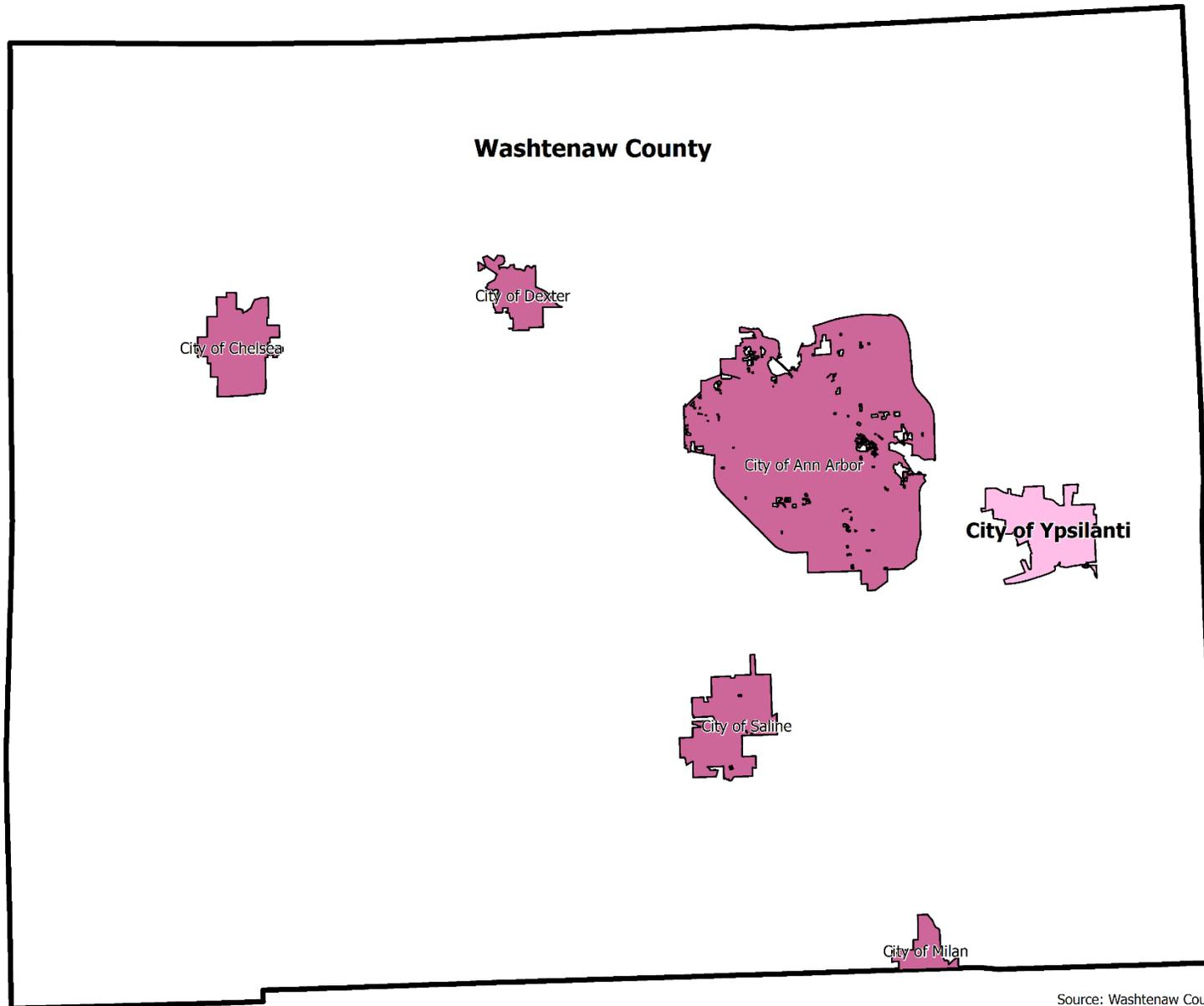
Over 400 focus group and charrette participants
2,038 people who like Shape Ypsi on Facebook
128 twitter followers
1,387 people who visited ShapeYpsi.com
155 e-mail newsletter subscribers
All the people who shared in this plan in thought, word and de

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To be finalized with page numbers after new design/formatting.

DRAFT

Map 1: Regional Context, City of Ypsilanti



Source: Washtenaw County GIS

Chapter 1: Small City. Unique History. New Plan.

“After careful review of many recent local plans, the City requests that respondents set aside existing templates and consider instead new approaches to a hybrid policy/land-use plan for the City of Ypsilanti.” -Request for Proposal, City of Ypsilanti, July 2012

The City of Ypsilanti is a small city of 4.3 square miles in southeastern Michigan. Located in Washtenaw County, it is within 15 miles of Detroit Metro Airport, 10 miles of Ann Arbor and 35 miles from Detroit. A distinctly urban place, its population density is one of the highest in Washtenaw County, at roughly 6.4 people per acre.

Ypsilanti is a historic community. It was the second city to incorporate in the State of Michigan, and has the fifth largest historic district in the state. Eastern Michigan University (EMU) was founded here in 1849. Transportation features prominently in Ypsilanti’s history, with the Chicago Road and Michigan Central Railroad driving the growth of the city’s various industries through the 19th and early 20th century. In the mid-20th century, the Willow Run plant and airport, and I-94 and US-23 continued the city’s location advantages, while automotive plants in and around the city tied the city’s manufacturing economy to transportation as well.

EMU continues to be a major employer and economic driver. It is the largest land owner in the City and the largest taxpayers are now primarily rental property owners.

However, the City’s economy has fundamentally changed with the decline of the automotive industry and manufacturing. Since 2001, Ypsilanti has lost close to 1,600 manufacturing jobs. This economic shift has caused both a reduction in real and personal property tax revenue, and an increase in vacant or under utilized industrial spaces. No single industry has emerged to replace the jobs and taxes generated by the automobile industry.

Instead, several sectors have potential to bring new vitality – small manufacturing and craft production, creative economy, renewable energy, and food. Summer events are a regional draw, and more recent efforts such as the Krampus Festival and Mittenfest foster the growing arts and music communities. Solar Ypsi and other groups support renewable energy efforts, while the Historic District Commission has adopted guidelines for solar panels. A growing reputation among foodies also has helped Ypsilanti secure its place in the region for both

every day and destination restaurants. Growing food in the City is supported by non-profits like Growing Hope and permaculture groups.

The City prides itself on its diversity. Ypsilanti has been a leader in civil rights, as the first City in Michigan to pass a living wage ordinance and an ordinance banning discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodation based on sexual orientation, gender identity/transgender status, or body weight. The U.S. Census analysis of 2010 population data ranked Ypsilanti as one of the top 5 Michigan Cities for gay couples.

At the same time, the City faces challenges. Approximately 40% of the City’s land area is used by tax exempt owners, limiting the tax base of the City. The building stock, while historic and often a selling point for the community, can decline in value without upkeep. The foreclosure crisis and great recession of 2008 hit Ypsilanti, like many Michigan cities, with the loss of jobs and home values. The City has one of higher unemployment rates in Washtenaw County.

The first year for the merged Ypsilanti Community School District was 2013. Until the district is on its feet, the schools will have an unknown impact on housing values.

Finally, the City must pay about 10% of its current budget on bonds for the previous acquisition, building demolition, and environmental cleanup of Water Street, a redevelopment area assembled by the City more than a decade ago. The last Master Plan, adopted in 1998, assumed that industrial users would remain. The economic shifts and the housing crisis that have taken place since have changed that assumption. This plan assumes growth on a micro-economic level. It concentrates on the assets of the people, businesses, buildings, and infrastructure. It uses these assets to set the framework for future development, redevelopment and preservation in the community. The plan also lays the groundwork for form-based zoning in Ypsilanti, which will implement goals of the master plan through regulation by street type, building typology as well as use.

THE PROCESS & THE PLAN

In 2012, the City of Ypsilanti received funding to draft a master plan and zoning ordinance as part of the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Sustainable Community Challenge Grant awarded to Washtenaw County. While the City of Ypsilanti has a long history of planning (see list on this page), the last Master Plan was over a decade old. Due to the challenges facing the City, staff, elected and appointed officials requested the master plan recognize both the good and the bad, set realistic goals, and emphasize policy as well as land use.

After selecting a consultant team to assist in the process, the City launched a community-driven process, called “Shape Ypsilanti”, to create the Master Plan in January 2013. The process utilized social media and a website separate from the City’s own to engage, educate, and empower. Feedback from on-line sources was used as fodder for discussions and decisions at a series of events, varying in size from interviews to two rounds of focus groups to community-wide, four-day charrettes in March and April 2013. Events were attended by more than 400 individuals. In 2018, the City of Ypsilanti decided to update its master plan to keep in line with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 requirement to review the document every five years, to check its progress on its action items, and determine next steps for future projects. The largest update is the incorporation of a Sustainability chapter that focuses on practices and policies to build resiliency against environmental change. The City’s intent in adopting a Sustainability chapter as part of the Master Plan is to use a sustainability framework in long-term land use decisions, including zoning.

The following document is the resulting Master Plan, grounded in real challenges and opportunities. The plan is divided into the following chapters:

- Chapter 2 – Guiding Values
- Chapter 3 – Ypsilanti Now
- Chapter 4 – City Framework
- Chapter 5 – Transportation
- Chapter 6 – Centers

- Chapter 7 – Neighborhoods
- Chapter 8 – Corridors
- Chapter 9 – Districts
- Chapter 10 - Redevelopment Areas
- Chapter 11 - Implementation

The solutions were created by the community for the community. However, many of the requests brought forth - more police, cameras in high-crime areas, recreation and programs for youth, street maintenance and repair, better public schools - are not within the scope of this plan as prescribed by Michigan State Law. These pressing issues can, and perhaps should, take precedence in allocating scant municipal resources over many of the projects and plans laid out in this document.

PREVIOUS PLANS REVIEWED FOR THIS PROCESS

- Olmsted Brothers Park Plan (Pre-World War II)
- 1971 Ypsilanti I, II, III
- 1993 Blueprints for Downtown
- 1996 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan
- 1998 City Master Plan
- 2001 Cross Street Neighborhood Improvement Plan
- 2008 Recreation Plan
- 2008 Downtown Blueprint
- 2010 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan
- 2012 Climate Action Plan
- Washtenaw County Consolidated Plan
- Washtenaw County Affordable Housing Needs Assessment
- Ypsilanti 2020 Task Force Report
- ReImagine Washtenaw Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Strategy (2010)
- SEMCOG & Washtenaw County Community Economic Development Plan
- South of Michigan Avenue Community Needs Assessment
- 2018 Energy Plan
- 2015 Housing Affordability and Economic Equity Analysis
- Huron Watershed Council

Chapter 2: Guiding Values

“What would you whisper into the ears of decision makers, like City Council?”

-Instructions to participants in Guiding Values Focus Groups

Appointed and elected officials use the City’s Master Plan as a guide when making decisions with limited resources about land use, housing, transportation, equity, quality of life, and sustainability. Traditionally, decision-makers reference the Master Plan when deciding what uses should be allowed on a parcel of land, whether and how a building can be constructed or an older building renovated; and how bicycle routes and streets are laid out. The City of Ypsilanti requested the guiding values for this Master Plan go beyond the usual scope of a land use plan and apply to budget decisions, allocation of resources, and general policy for the City. This chapter provides a list of guiding values from the community and a decision-making rubric for City leaders, not only for land use but for over arching policy.

These guiding values are based on focus group sessions held in January and February 2013 and then presented to the public in the Discover Charrette in March of the same year. The sessions were held in different locations across the city. The over 50 participants represented Eastern Michigan students, business groups, historic preservation groups, real estate developers, arts groups, event organizers, churches, youth groups and residents from neighborhoods South of Michigan and on the west side of Ypsilanti. Two Saturday sessions were also held at a downtown restaurant for the general public.

The following ten values were mentioned by all the groups when they were asked what the guiding values should be for the City:

Safety comes first

The City is dedicated to being a secure place to live, study, work, visit, and play. While budgets for safety services are separate from the Master Plan, decisions about land use, housing, transportation, equity and sustainability should protect and enhance safety.

Diversity is our strength

Ypsilanti is a multicultural city with people from different races, sexual orientations, incomes, and walks of life. The ability to be who you are attracts

people to Ypsilanti. In decisions, the City will ask how actions welcome, provide opportunity for and sustain its diverse population.

Ypsilanti is sustainable

Every decision should foster the future, while replenishing resources – natural, economic and social. Efforts to make the city an environmentally sustainable place will continue. The financial viability of the city in 20 years should factor into decisions. Equity for everyone in Ypsilanti is another priority.

Communication is key

Information, especially from the City, should be shared with all neighborhoods and groups in the manner that will reach them, be that on the web, in the mail or via flyers. Programs should reach out to all, giving everyone a chance.

Anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti

Housing options should match the needs of the people. Those needs will change as residents age and move. The need for safe, quality, affordable homes for all should be factored into decisions.

Anyone can easily walk, bike, drive or take transit from anywhere in Ypsilanti and to anywhere else in Ypsilanti and beyond

The citizens of Ypsilanti want a complete transportation system with room on the roads for cars, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians, including those in wheelchairs or with strollers. The City is committed to integrating into the emerging regional transit system while enhancing the walkability of the community.

Ypsilanti is a great place to do business, especially the green and creative kind

The City of Ypsilanti will create a business environment that fosters the creativity and energy personified by City’s best known businesses, while attracting new businesses and fostering locally grown enterprises. Green and sustainable

businesses, like those that have already developed in Ypsilanti, will be encouraged.

Everyone in the region knows Ypsilanti has great things to do in great places that are in great shape!

Ypsilanti has a wealth of beautiful places, historic buildings, and fun activities. These assets will be built upon and shouted from the rooftops. Ypsilanti's image should match its vibrancy. Vibrancy comes from preserving, using, and enriching all places. While permanent uses may not be found for vacant buildings immediately, temporary or pop-up activities should be options.

Ypsilanti is an asset of Eastern Michigan University, and Eastern Michigan University is an asset of Ypsilanti

The futures of Ypsilanti and Eastern Michigan University are entwined. The City will plan and develop policies for Ypsilanti to be a home for the university itself, as well as its students, faculty and staff. The physical planning of the community

and university should be coordinated, as well as efforts to welcome and integrate Ypsilanti as treasured part of the EMU experience.

We can only achieve our vision by building a community amongst ourselves and with our neighbors

Relationships are the key to success. While each group and neighborhood needs space for themselves, the City thrives when we work together. The community includes not only those who live in the City, but those who work and study here and own businesses as well as Ypsilanti Community Schools, neighboring municipalities, the City of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County.

The table on the following pages is a decision making rubric for elected and appointed officials, with questions and measures for each guiding value. The chapter following the decision rubric explores the current state of the City in terms of safety, diversity and sustainability, the core values to which all of the others relate.

DECISION MAKING RUBRIC

When making decisions, City of Ypsilanti officials, staff and citizens will ask if the option chosen furthers at least one, if not several of the values below, while not damaging the others. Starting with the adoption of this plan until the next master plan is written, it is incumbent upon the responsible party to track the “measures” listed as they provide some insight into whether the outcomes of City efforts are effective responses the decision-making questions.

Guiding Value	Questions	Measures	Responsible Party
Safety comes first	Does this action protect or enhance safety?	Trend in crime rates	Police Department (PD)
	Is natural surveillance, where people can see what is going on in public places from private ones, created?	% of functioning street lights	Department of Public Safety (DPS)
	Are public spaces, private spaces, and semi-public spaces easily known, so the average person knows where the street ends and someone's property begins?	Design standards that differentiate between public and private space	Community & Economic Development (CED)
	Are public spaces (parks, streets, parking lots) well lit?	Enforcement of parking lot lighting requirements	CED
	Are the places for emergency vehicles clear, accessible, and placed to best help first responders do their job?	# of pedestrians/bicyclist crashes	DPS
Diversity is our strength	Does this action welcome and/or sustain Ypsilanti's diverse population?	Changes in ethnic mix, city-wide and by neighborhood	CED
	Does this action welcome new groups to Ypsilanti?	Changes in diversity of ages by neighborhood	CED
	Does this action reward or privilege one group over another?	# of public facilities and/or buildings with universal design (accessibility measure)	DPS
	Are policies flexible enough to allow and encourage diversity?	Trends in business types (number and % of tax base)	Building Department
	Does this action create/maintain/improve the diversity of the business mix?	Change in income city-wide and by neighborhood	CED

Guiding Value	Questions	Measures	Responsible Party
Ypsilanti is sustainable	Does this action replenish resources?	Trend in greenhouse gas emissions	DPS
	Does this action make Ypsilanti a more environmentally sustainable place?	# of kilowatts produced by renewable energy installations	DPS
	Does this action improve the financial viability of the city in 20 years?	Trend in budget deficits	Finance
	Does this action create job opportunities for all residents?	Number of jobs created in Ypsilanti that pay a livable wage	CED
	Do the jobs created provide a livable wage? Does this action encourage, provide, or promote equity?	Number living wage jobs produced through city contracts	Finance
Communication is key	Does this action help communicate with everyone in the community?	Number of people who have signed up for the city's newsletter	CED
	Were all members of the community told about deliberation of this action in an accessible way?	Budget devoted to communication including printing, mailing, social media participation, and website update.	Finance
	How will the results of this action be shared with the community in an accessible way?	# of website hits	CED
	Is communication infrastructure maintained and enhanced?	Change in voter participation by ward	Clerk
	Is the City maintaining relationships to communicate to groups throughout the City?	# of social media followers	CED

Guiding Value	Questions	Measures	Responsible Party
Anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti	Does this action preserve, improve and/or create viable, safe, affordable homes?	Change in the % of cost-burdened households	Housing Commission
	Does this action preserve/create variety in housing products in terms of size (square footage and/or # of bedrooms) and ownership/rental type?	Trends in the # residential building permits by building type (single-family, 2-5 unit, 5+ unit) by neighborhood	CED
	Will this action result in the continued maintenance and care of existing residences?	Supply and demand for senior housing	Housing Commission
	Do residents, especially young adults and seniors, have the ability and/or resources to maintain their homes?	Trends in home ownership among young professionals and pre-family households	Housing Commission
	Will this action preserve or create housing that is needed?	Number of residential blight violations	CED
		Median housing values by neighborhood	Housing Commission
Easily walk, bike, drive or take transit from anywhere	Does this action preserve or create a complete transportation system with room on the roads for cars, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians?	# of miles of additional bicycle paths and sidewalk	DPS
	Does this action reward those taking a short trip with the City, rather than those passing through?	Increase in bus ridership from Ypsilanti residents	CED
	Does this action help Ypsilanti be part of the regional transportation network?	Amount of money spent on maintenance of streets, sidewalks, and multi-use paths	Finance
		Change in "drive alone" commuting	CED
		Traffic counts for all transportation modes of key intersections	DPS

Guiding Value	Questions	Measures	Responsible Party
Great place to do business, especially green and creative	Does this action create a business environment that fosters creativity?	# of new green/creative businesses started	CED
	Does this action attract new and/or retain existing businesses?	# and types of grants issued	DDA/CED
	Does this action foster locally grown enterprises?	Demographic data of grant recipients	CED
	Does this action reward green and sustainable businesses?	# of local business expansions	DDA/CED
		Length of time to complete the site plan and permitting process	CED
Everyone in the region knows Ypsilanti has great things to do in great places that are in great shape!	Does this action preserve, use, and/or enrich all places?	Volunteer hours/personnel hours dedicated to event planning and operation	CED & CVB
	Does this action enhance Ypsilanti's reputation as a great place?	Condition of streetscape amenities (benches, landscaping, bicycle racks)	DPS
	Does this action bring people to visit great places in Ypsilanti?	Attendance at City-sponsored events	CED & CVB
		Ratio of positive/negative feedback of events from visitors	CED & CVB
		Distance visitors traveled to attend the event	CED & CVB

Guiding Value	Questions	Measures	Responsible Party
Ypsilanti is an asset of Eastern Michigan University, and Eastern Michigan University is an asset of Ypsilanti	Does this action help Ypsilanti be a home for the university itself, as well as its students, faculty, and staff?	# of joint programs between the City and EMU	CED
	Does this action integrate Ypsilanti as part of the EMU experience?	# of projects that EMU students/faculty assist with that serve the City	CED
	Does this action support EMU's integration into the City?	# students and faculty that live in Ypsilanti	CED
Build a community amongst ourselves and with our neighbors	Does this action build community within the City?	# of users of the app nextdoor.com	CED
	Does this action foster relationships with school districts, neighboring municipalities, the City of Ann Arbor, and Washtenaw County?	# of joint meetings between government bodies, community groups, Ypsilanti schools, etc.	CED
	Does this action and/or communication celebrate successes within the City as a community?	The formation of neighborhood associations	CED
		# of youth participants	CED
		Hours of City staff spent with community organizations	CED

Chapter 3 – Ypsilanti Now

“There are three sides to every story in Ypsilanti.” -unsolicited advice e-mailed to the Consultant Team from a former City resident

The following chapter lays out the latest facts about the City of Ypsilanti - the people, the buildings, the economy, and the transportation network (roads, buses, bicycle lanes and sidewalks). Each section ends with policy implications that have influenced the Master Plan and should be factored into future decisions.

Population

Like many of Michigan’s older industrial towns, Ypsilanti saw rapid mid-century population growth, followed by more recent declines (Figure 1). The city has a sizable African-American population, though as captured in the “Percent Minority” map, the city remains racially segregated by neighborhood. The city’s industrial heritage has also left the city’s population vulnerable to the past decades of deindustrialization, with pockets of high poverty and unemployment.

The historic core of Ypsilanti was a mature industrial town of nearly 7,500 people by the beginning of the 20th century, with population changing only modestly over the next 30 years. However, both the industrial mobilization of World War II and the auto industry’s post-war boom were reflected in population growth, with the Census reporting a peak of 29,538 residents in 1970.

Since that time, the city’s population has shrunk to 19,435 in 2010 and an estimated 20,804 in 2017 per American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates— only slightly higher than the city’s 1950 population. Population forecasts by ESRI, a proprietary software program, projects that the population will increase to about 21,443 by 2024.

Ypsilanti, like the nation as a whole, has seen household sizes decline over time. Societal trends, including delaying marriage and childbearing, have led to more householders living alone or as married couples without children. In Ypsilanti, the household size declined from 2.38 in 1990 to 2.29 in 2000 to 2.06 in 2010. Yet, as of 2017 ACS 5-year estimates, the trend has reversed: household size has increased again to 2.26. Additionally, rental households had fewer average residents than owner-occupied households: 2.19 compared to 2.41, perhaps contrary to popular belief. The same is true at the county and state level.

Shape Ypsilanti Master Plan (DRAFT UPDATE) – July 15, 2020

Age, Educational Attainment & University Influence

When analyzed at a City level, the City of Ypsilanti has a younger population (see Figure 3) than its neighbors, the region, and the state of Michigan overall. However, when broken down by census tract, younger populations are clustered around the Eastern Michigan campus (Map 2). The enrollment numbers of Eastern Michigan University have increased (see Figure 2) since 1960, with a few dips and a slight decline in enrollment over the past two decades – as of the 2019 fall semester, Eastern Michigan has a total enrollment of 17,784 students.¹ The same pattern emerges for educational attainment. Ypsilanti’s population overall has a relatively high level of educational attainment, especially compared to the region and state. However, Maps 3-6 show a large geographic disparity, with residents holding a college degree ranging from 59.0% in the northern part of the city to 15.5% in the southwest portion. With the current emphasis on education as the key to individual and community prosperity, this education gap has troubling implications for the city’s ability to fully participate in the knowledge economy.

The University presence appears to counter the declining industrial sector, when the city is viewed as a whole. However, these two trends have impacted different parts of the population: the educational influence in some ways masks, rather than mitigates, the impacts of deindustrialization.

Equity, Race, Ethnicity & Income

Ypsilanti is a diverse community in terms of race, ethnicity, and disability. The city prides itself on its reputation as welcoming to all, as evidenced in its guiding values.

The city has a sizable African-American population, comprising about 30.3% of the city’s population as of 2017– a slight decline since 2010 (31.9%). Approximately 4.5% of residents identified as Hispanic and 3.5% Asian in 2017— while these numbers are relatively small, they have grown or stayed the same since 2000 Census and the 3.9% Hispanic and 4.3% Asian in the 2010 Census.

That is to say, that as the city grows and shrinks, it is staying racially and ethnically diverse.

African-American residents predominantly live in the southwestern portion of the city—2017 ACS 5-year estimates show around 68% of residents in this area to be African-American. This is down from 80% in 2010 and from 90% in 2000, showing a steady change in racial composition over the past two decades.

Regardless of this change, when combined with data also showing lower educational attainment levels and household income, a distinct racial, economic, and educational segregation exists even in a small city like Ypsilanti. The city needs to focus on ensuring the residents of challenged areas receive a sufficient share of public resources to maintain equity.

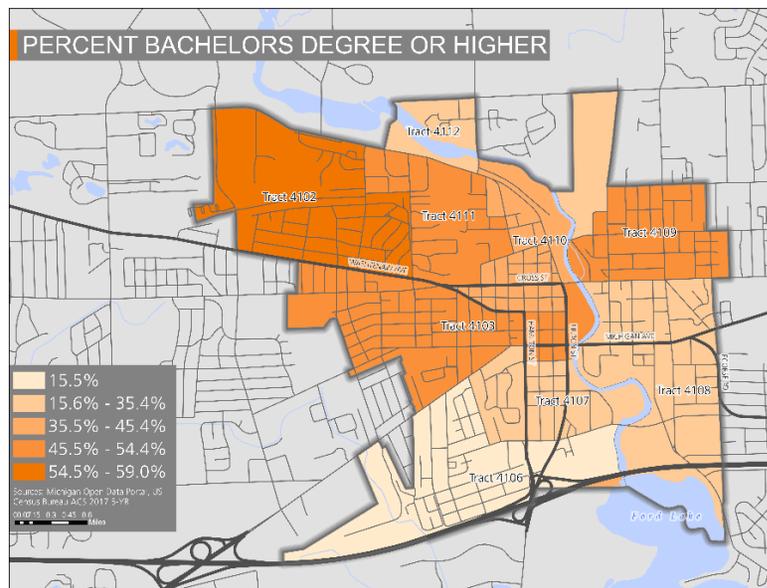
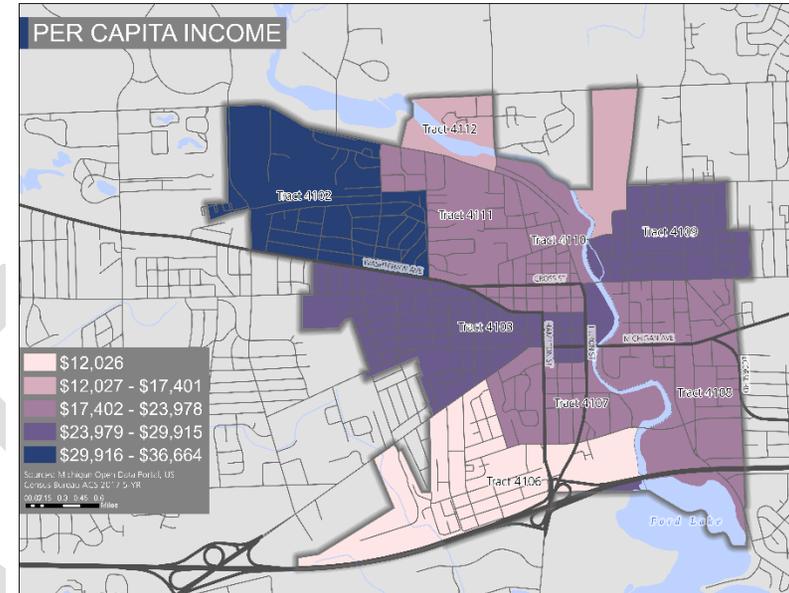
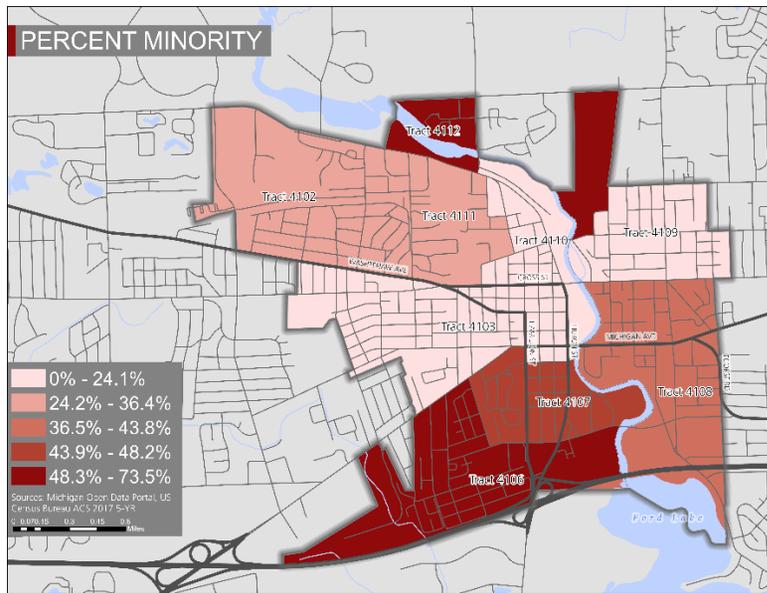
As a whole, the estimated 2017 per capita income for the City is \$24,381 which is less than the state as a whole at \$28,938. In comparison, Washtenaw County's per capita income is \$37,455, showing that Ypsilanti's residents earn about 65% of the County's per capita income. Three census tracts (tract 4102, 4103, 4109) in the City are above the state per capita levels (consistent with 2010 census data), with one of the City's tracts earning less than half of the state per capita income: census tract 4106. With this in mind, 2020 is a census year, and it's most important tracking these trends from census to census rather than census-to-ACS.

The maps 3-6 tell multiple stories:

- Compared to the state of Michigan overall, Ypsilanti is a racially diverse city, with a range of education levels and incomes. It should be poised to take advantage of the knowledge economy of the 21st century given its proximity to knowledge-based sectors.
- The City of Ypsilanti is as racially diverse as Ypsilanti Township. However, its per capita income is lower than the adjoining municipalities with Ypsilanti Township having the lowest educational attainment. In attracting knowledge economy firms, the City competes regionally with its neighbors. Ann Arbor, to the west, is home to the University of Michigan and has more residents with college degrees and higher incomes.
- Within the city itself, race, income, educational attainment, and location are interconnected. The differences in educational attainment and income mean that one size cannot fit all in terms of policy for the entire City. When implementing policies to achieve safety, diversity and

sustainability for the City, the needs and strengths of residents in each neighborhood must be taken into account because they are different.

Maps 3-5: Sensitive Population Analysis: Minority, Education, & Income



ACS 2017 5-Year Estimates, verified for statistical significance at the 90% confidence interval.

Maps produced by Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

HOUSING

Ypsilanti has strong, stable neighborhoods, historic architecture, and a ratio of rental-to-owner occupancy higher than the national average, but typical of a college town. As of 2017, 69.2% of occupied dwelling units were renter-occupied and 30.8% owner-occupied. This split is nearly opposite the national owner-occupancy rate of 63.8% and the Washtenaw County owner-occupancy rate of 60.2%. However, it is similar to other college towns in the region, as shown in Figure 4.

Only about 36% of dwelling units in the city are detached single-family structures. About 41% of housing units are in structures that contain more than 5 dwelling units, and 16% of dwelling units are in structures that contain 20 or more units. By comparison, Washtenaw County as a whole has 57% of total dwelling units found in detached single-family family structures, 26% in structures with at least 5 units, and only 8% in structures with at least 20 units.

Occupancy and housing type are strongly related, as shown in Maps 6 and 7. While the city does have some single-family rental housing and some owner-occupied units in multi-unit structures, 92% of detached single-family homes in the city are owner-occupied, according to 2020 assessment data.

The clustering of rental units in large on-campus and near-campus student apartments complexes, and a few other large multi-family properties compared to the owner-occupied dominance of single-family homes means that focusing only on the percentage of units that are rental-occupied may exaggerate the impact of rental housing on Ypsilanti neighborhoods: when measured on a parcel basis, rather than by dwelling units, 66.7% of Ypsilanti's residential properties were owner-occupied residences in 2010, and an additional 2.6% partially owner-occupied (e.g. multi-unit houses with the owner living on-site). On a land area basis, single-family homes make up 64.4% of the city's residential property area.

The amount of rental housing in the city is also strongly related to the city's relatively young population, including student households: 25% of households in the city are headed by a householder aged 15-24; of these households, 99% rent their homes. Another 25% of households are headed by a 25- to 34-year-old

householder; of these households, 85% rent their homes, which is a dramatic increase from 2010 where only 65% of householders in this age range rented their homes. The housing market analysis on the following pages (see Figure 8) analyzes these trends and others by census tract.

Ypsilanti has a historic core of neighborhoods built before 1900. Developed before the advent of the automobile, they were designed for pedestrians with parks, business districts, and the community within comfortable walking distance from housing. Over the years, many of the homes were subdivided for worker housing during World War II or later as student housing. The early 2000s saw the greatest change in the city's housing stock since the 1970s, with building permit data showing a nearly 5% increase in housing units in the first half of the decade. Most of this was multi-family construction, though of diverse types.

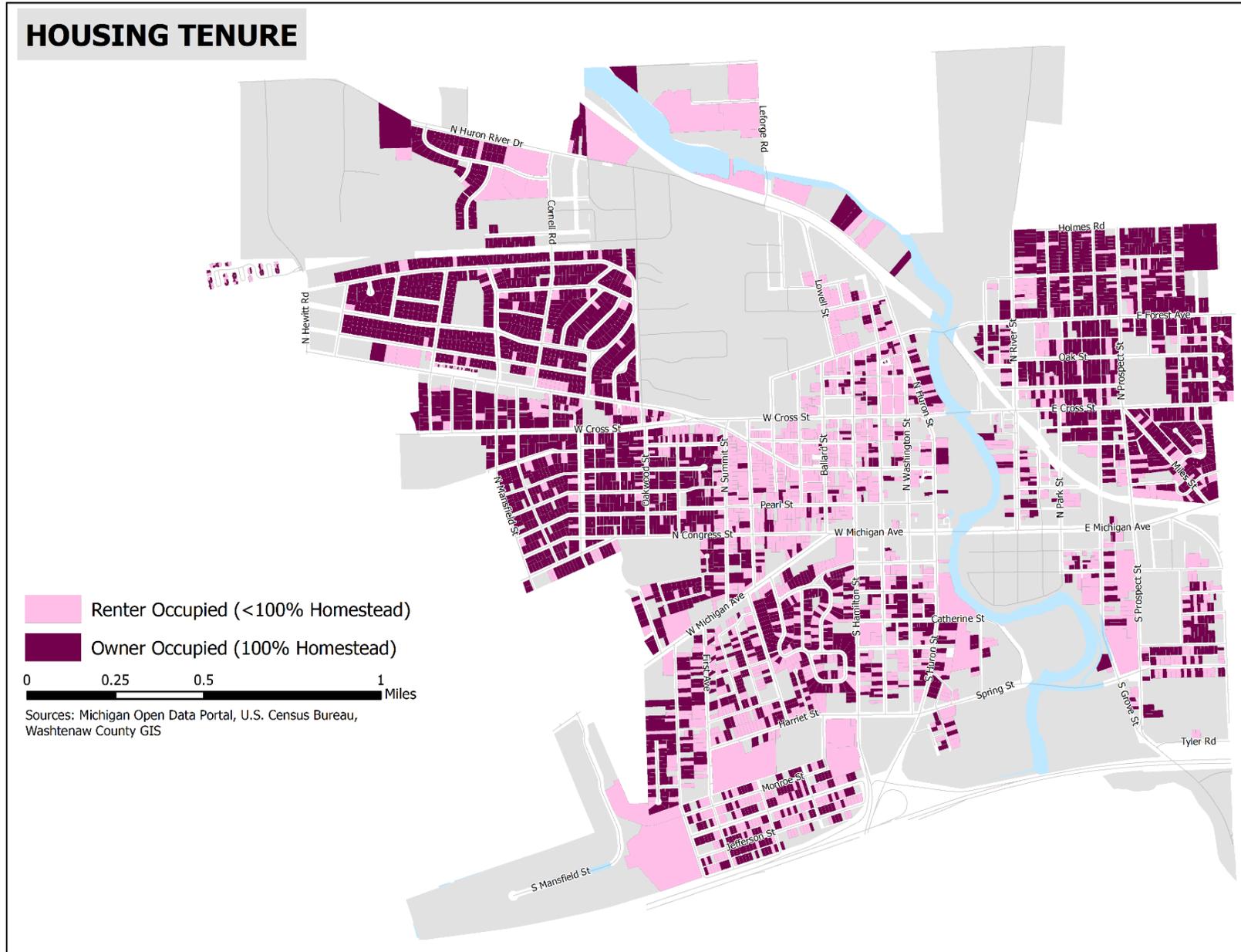
Despite Ypsilanti's base of strong historic neighborhoods, the 2015 Housing Affordability and Economic Equity Analysis for Washtenaw County indicates that the City of Ypsilanti's housing market is "fundamentally weak." According to the report, there is increasing inequity within the County between the Ann Arbor area and the Ypsilanti area (City and Township). Property values are increasing in the Ann Arbor housing market to unaffordable levels, displacing Ann Arbor residents to Ypsilanti, creating an increasingly imbalanced market. More affordable housing values are resulting in higher concentrations of struggling families in the Ypsilanti area. Many of the subsidized housing units in the County are concentrated in Ypsilanti, a trend that this report recommends reversing – dispersing subsidized housing throughout the County will help lessen the increasing concentration of cost-burdened households in Ypsilanti.² The size of dwelling units and lot sizes is one tool that cities have to try to create a range of market rate housing options for people of all incomes and life stages. The City has been proactive in updating its zoning ordinance to permit a greater variety of housing.

Figure 4: Housing Tenure for University Towns

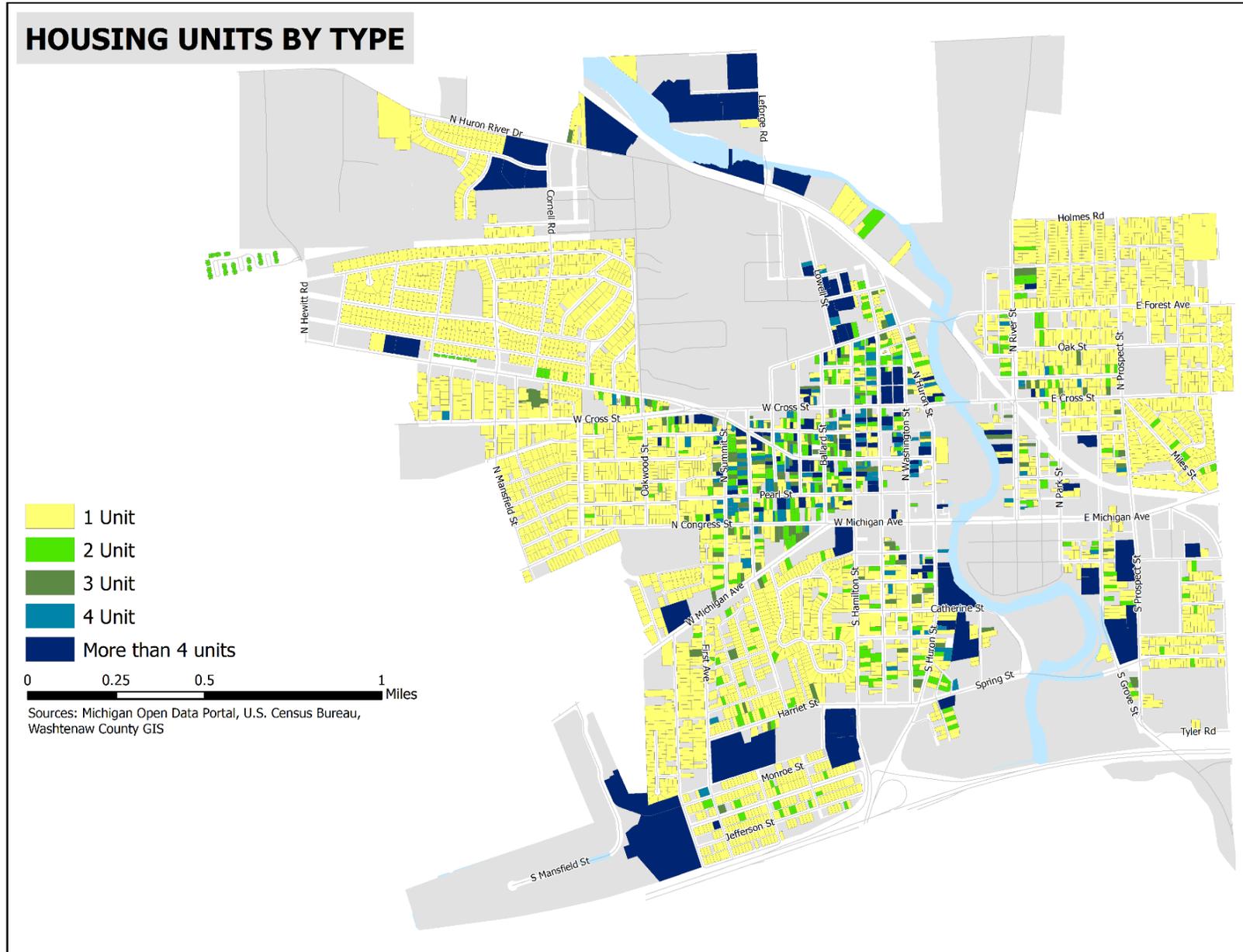
City	Occupied housing units (2017)	Percentage Rental (2017)
Athens, Ohio	6,887	71.4
Oxford, Ohio	6,006	69.4
Ypsilanti	7,865	69.2
East Lansing	13,585	66.2
Bowling Green, Ohio	11,291	62.2
Mt. Pleasant	8,027	60.9
Kalamazoo	28,996	55.2
Ann Arbor	47,524	54.1
Marquette	7,587	50.8
Muncie, Indiana	27,666	48.6
Sault Ste. Marie	5,581	45.2

Source: ACS 2013-2017 5-Year estimates

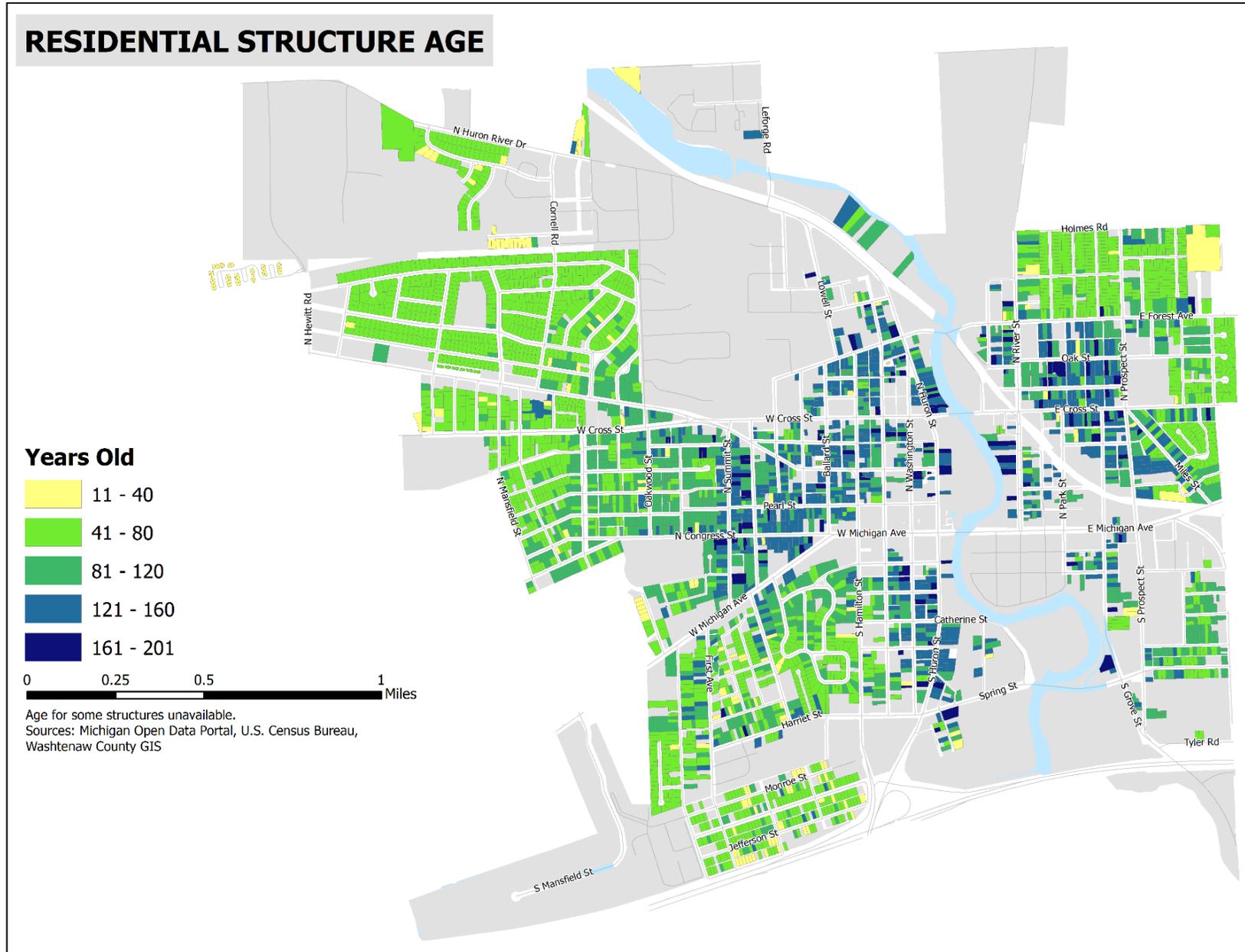
Map 6: Rental & Occupied Housing



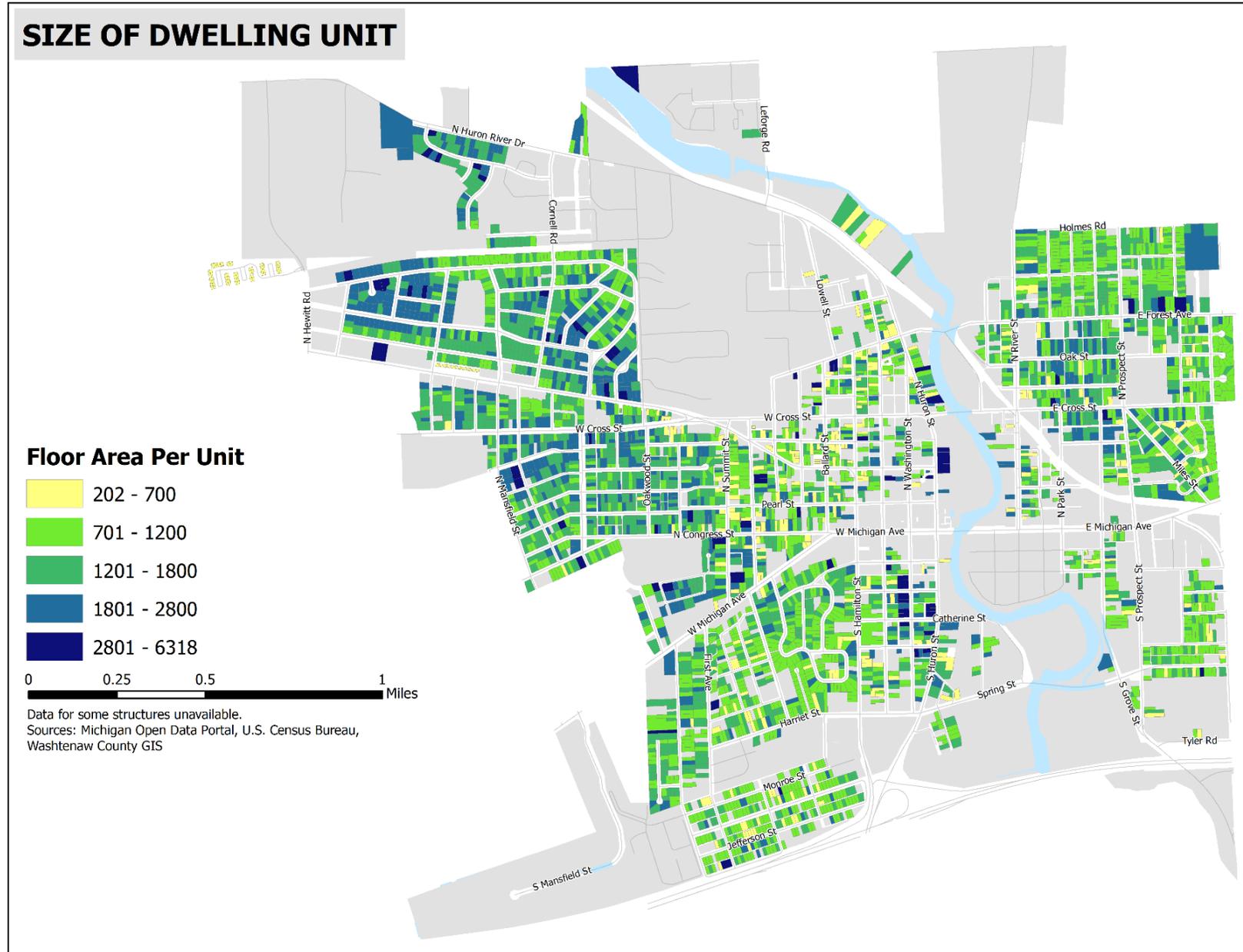
Map 7: Housing Units by Type



Map 8: Residential Structure Age



Map 9: Size of Dwelling Unit



Housing Data Summary

The following factors are key to the Master Plan:

- The majority of housing units are leased, rather than owner-occupied, which tracks with the housing mix in other college towns.
- Census data shows concentrations of renters in the same tracts with a higher percentage of younger adults, under the age of 24, indicating the influence of EMU students on the housing market.
- Most single-family homes are owner-occupied.
- Neighborhoods near EMU and the historic downtown were built, earlier, have a mix of rental and owner-occupied units as well as larger houses
- Housing built post-World War II is smaller, either mostly rentals or mostly owner-occupied and has fewer conversions to multiple-family and other uses.
- Census tracts 4102, 4107, and 4109 have aging populations, which means they will need services to stay in their homes or they will move to a different residence within the next 10-20 years.
- EMU will continue to bring residents - students to the Midtown and Riverside neighborhoods, and faculty/staff to the College Heights and Normal Park neighborhoods. However, both groups reside in all areas of the City.
- Rail service at Depot Town will increase housing values and demand for housing within a 10-minute walk, approximately a half-mile radius, of the stop.
- Heritage Park and Worden Gardens are where first-time home buyers and income property purchasers are most likely to purchase houses.
- Well-maintained, historic neighborhoods have continued to hold their value and will likely in the future.
- Housing inequity within Washtenaw County is increasing with a growing divide between the strengthening Ann Arbor market and Ypsilanti's weaker market.

Figure 7: Housing Market Analysis

To be added/formatted later.

DRAFT

ECONOMY

The decline of manufacturing’s prominence has changed the list of major employers in the area. The current list of the top 20 major employers (defined as having at least 500 employees in the Washtenaw County) along with the list in the City’s 1998 and 2013 Master Plans shows an absence of manufacturing firms. Instead, educational and medical employers dominate the list, of the top 10, eight of the major employers are related to education, health care, or government, most of which are located in Ann Arbor (see Figure 8). Faurecia North America has grown immensely over the last few years, a testament to a growing economy in comparison to 2013. Still, the trajectory for manufacturing, while still an important component of Michigan’s economy, is predicted to shrink.³ Ypsilanti is growing farther apart from its industrial past.

While many jobs are still located in or relatively close to Ypsilanti, these jobs may require a higher level of education on average than the previous manufacturing jobs. This trend is a concern because, as noted previously, parts of the City have extremely low educational attainment rates. These parts of the community are at-risk for being left behind by the changing character of the job market and the shift from manufacturing to a knowledge economy.

Figure 8: Change Number of Employees in Washtenaw County

Company	Location (Primary)	2019	2013	2010	1998	Trend
University of Michigan	Ann Arbor	33,225	16,143	26,241	11,118	↑
University Health Systems	Ann Arbor		12,000	19,614	6,742	
Trinity Health	Livonia	7,435				----
Federal government	Detroit	3,147				----
Ann Arbor Public Schools	Ann Arbor	2,225	3,578	2,659		↓
Integrated Health Associates	Ann Arbor	1,664				----
Eastern Michigan University	Ypsilanti	1,559	1,976	1,950	1,991	↓
Faurecia North America	Saline	1,442	800			↑
Thomson Reuters	Ann Arbor	1,300	1,100	1,800		↓
Washtenaw County	Ann Arbor	1,264	1,339	1,345	1,200	↑
Terumo Cardiovascular Group	Ann Arbor	1,100				----
Toyota Technical Center	York Township	1,095	1,500	1,036		↑
St Joseph Mercy Chelsea	Chelsea	1,082				----
Domino's Pizza	Ann Arbor Twp	865				----
IBM Watson Health	Ann Arbor	850				----
City of Ann Arbor	Ann Arbor	712	710	766	951	↓
Ford Motor Company	Ypsilanti	700	823	800	1200	↓
Zingerman's Family of Business	Ann Arbor	700				----

Table Data Source: 2013 & 2019 figures - Ann Arbor Spark; 2010 - Draft AAATA Transit Audit Needs Assessment; 1998 - Washtenaw Economic Development Council-Crain's Detroit Business

Figure 9: Major Taxpayers, 1999-2020

Major Taxpayers	2020			2013			2009			1999		
	Taxable Value (in 1,000s)	City Rank	% of total	Taxable Value (in 1,000s)	City Rank	% of total	Taxable Value (in 1,000s)	City Rank	% of total	Taxable Value in 1,000s)	City Rank	% of total
Arbor One 18, LLC	\$5,650	1	2.33%									
LeForge Station II, LLC	\$5,353	2	2.21%	\$8,249	1	2.84%	\$9,148	3	2.27%			
Barnes & Barnes Properties, LLC	\$5,212	3	2.15%	\$2,918	4	1.01%	\$3,046	7	0.76%			
DTE Electric Company (formerly Detroit Edison)	\$5,019	4	2.07%	\$3,360	2	1.16%	9,537	2	2.37%	\$4,265	2	1.54%
River Drive Properties, LLC	\$3,191	5	1.32%	\$2,921	3	1.01%	3,400	5	0.84%	\$3,267	5	1.18%
DTE Gas Company (formerly Mich Con Utility)	\$2,687	6	1.11%	\$2,900	5	1.00%	-			\$3,641	4	1.31%
Forrest Knoll Apts.	\$2,023	7	0.84%	\$1,849	6	0.64%						
Ypsilanti Realty Holdings, LLC	\$1,711	8	0.71%									
Erie Investments No. 15, LLC	\$1,639	9	0.68%									
Cross Street Village	\$1,638	10	0.68%									
Asad Khailany	-			\$1,811	7	0.62%	\$1,811	9	0.45%	\$1,413	10	0.51%
Forest Health Medical (formerly Beyer Hospital)	-					0.82%	\$3,304	6	0.82%	\$1,904	0	0.69%
Beal Properties	\$1,221			\$2,369	8	0.55%						
Huron View Apartments	\$1,594			\$1,587	9	0.50%	\$1,706	10	0.42%			
Angstrom USA, LLC (formerly Visteon)	-			\$1,460	10		28,266	1	7.02%	\$42,470	1	15.33%
River Rain Apartments	\$1,518					0.46%	\$2,232	8	0.55%	\$1,939	8	0.70%
Reichuang, LLC (formerly Exemplar Manufacturing)	\$1,118			\$862						\$4,151	3	1.50%
Crown Paper Company Manufacturing	-			\$1,334						\$2,935	6	1.06%
Eastern Village Apartments	-			-		0.00%				\$1,261	7	0.46%
Total of top ten taxpayers	\$34,123		14.09%	\$29,424		6.47%	\$66,262		16.45%	\$67,246		24.28%

Commercial Assessment

In the 2013 master plan, a commercial assessment estimated that \$59,687,099 of potential sales leaves the City, accounting for 55% of the total sales potential for the Ypsilanti market area. While the same analysis was not conducted, similar estimates from ESRI for the “retail gap” in 2017 show the trend in lost sales has shrunk to \$34,553,228, which shows that more money is being captured locally and potential drawing more visitors in. Most of the surplus in spending is coming from sales in “food and drink.” This is a positive trend and an indication to continue tailoring economic development efforts to reduce the retail gap in areas where there is major “leakage”: food and beverage, general merchandise, clothing and accessories, furniture and home furnishing, and electronics and appliances.

The following commercial markets were identified for potential growth:

- **The Ypsilanti Competitive Market:** In 2013 focus groups, residents expressed a fierce devotion to local businesses. Also, many wanted to be able to walk or bike to get daily items. Frustration was continually expressed about the lack of a full-line grocery store and specialty food markets in the City limits.
- **Underestimated College Student Market:** EMU students are a recession-proof market. However, their spending patterns are different than non-student households with similar incomes. They tend to spend a greater percentage of their money on electronics, food away from home and consumer items, than family households in the same earning classification.
- **Neighboring Medical Center Market:** The St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Hospital is located in Superior Township, near the City’s border. The staff, estimated to exceed 5,000 people, and the visitors to the complex are an untapped market for the City’s retail businesses, including restaurants and entertainment.

Emerging Sectors

While no one sector has replaced the manufacturing jobs lost in the City, several sectors have emerged: small manufacturing and craft production, creative economy, renewable energy, and food. Each of these sectors are rooted in companies that have started in Ypsilanti.

Small and craft manufacturing has been a part of the City’s economy since the beginning of the automobile industry. Small craft shops clustered around the larger manufacturing facilities supplying parts and prototypes. Marsh Plating was

founded over forty years ago, located near the downtown, is an example of an automobile supplier in the City. Michigan Ladder is another example of a small manufacturing facility in the City. The 119-year old company has recently expanded its manufacturing space, where wood and fiberglass ladders are assembled and hopes to add 6 new jobs to its workforce between 2013 and 2015. The challenge for the City is to make these industries operation and expansion possible while meeting the values of the community.

The creative economy - defined as advertising, architecture, art, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, research and development, software, toys and games, television and radio, and video games - has gained a foothold in Ypsilanti. Various businesses have started in or relocated to Ypsilanti, such as VGKids. VGKids is a screen printing company that has consolidated operations in the City, after closing a manufacturing facility in California. The company also provides studio space to small creative businesses. More recently, Grove Studios and Ypsi Alloy Studio have opened, the former a 24/7 music rehearsal space and the latter is a shared space to create and collaborate on visual arts. While these types of businesses can generally use many types of buildings, the building stock is not always suitable. The current zoning ordinance is friendly to creative enterprise as they are permitted in several commercial and industrial zones, but mid-size facilities for growing companies to move into - either office or small manufacturing - are difficult to find.

While no privately held renewable energy company is operating in Ypsilanti, the efforts of individuals and groups have given the City of Ypsilanti a reputation as a leader in sustainable energy. An example of the momentum within the City is SolarYpsi, a volunteer effort to bring solar energy generation to the City of Ypsilanti. The group has helped win grants to fund and/or help install four solar facilities in the City and maintains a website that reports in real time the amount of energy being generated by solar installations in and around the City.

In 2016, DTE Energy completed the installation of a solar array on Ypsilanti’s Highland Cemetery. The approximately 2,520 solar panels are enough to power 150 homes!⁴ City government can use this effort and others as a marketing tool to attract renewable energy manufacturers or installation companies to the City. The City has revised its ordinances and been awarded a SolSmart Gold award for having an online permitting checklist, permitting solar by-right as an accessory use in all zones, cross-training inspection and permitting staff, and a streamlined

permitting process for small photovoltaic systems (more detail in the Sustainability Section).⁵ The city is proud to be the first in Michigan to receive this award from a national program.

A number food-based businesses have opened in Ypsilanti in the past five years. Multiple new restaurants have opened in the Historic Downtown. The farmers market was recently established in Historic Downtown. Many vendors are Ypsilanti residents who produce value-added products, like baked goods and jams, out of their home kitchens under the Michigan Cottage Food Law. Also, more residents are growing and/or raising their own food. Growing Hope, an Ypsilanti-based non-profit, is a leader in the local food movement in the region and provides technical support to beginning and experienced gardeners as well as children. Restaurant Depot, in Ypsilanti Township, supplies wholesale food, beverages, and equipment to restaurants and plays a role in the growth of this sector. Like the creative economy businesses, food-based businesses have challenges when they expand in scale. Home entrepreneurs reach a point where a commercial kitchen is needed. Restaurants need a larger space. The City has permitted hoop houses and greenhouses to create more space in park and residential districts to encourage urban agriculture. The City can continue to foster growth of food-based businesses by permitting incubator kitchens as an intermediate step for entrepreneurs in this field.

In 2018, recreational marijuana was passed by Michigan voters and sales are now legal. Ypsilanti adopted its own business ordinance and zoning ordinance, which means that provisioning centers that sell marijuana for recreational uses are permitted. Within the last five years, over a half a dozen grow facilities and dispensaries emerged under the medicinal legislation. Because sales for recreational use just went into effect, it is too soon to say what affect this may have. Like other businesses, they are subject to the market, however, because hundreds of communities have banned such sales, it may produce certain hot spots in the state.

The City should align its policies and regulations to give each of these emerging sectors physical space and economic incentives to start or locate and then grow in the City. Zoning should allow these uses in various sizes and formats, while being cognizant of impacts on neighbors. Economic incentives, such as tax abatements, should be used to continue the growth of these sectors.

City Budget

Over the last decade, the city's industrial tax base has declined, both in total dollar value and in share of the total, with residential property making up a greater portion of the tax base. The foreclosure crisis in turn contributed to a substantial loss of residential taxable value, beginning in 1998. As of July 2019, the City's total taxable value is \$242,124,962.

The character of the city's tax base has shifted towards residential rental property, with most of the city's top 10 taxpayers in 2019 being property management companies, which has been a significant change over the past two decades (see Figure 9). The top ten taxpayers represent about 14% of the City's tax base, which has risen from less than 9% in 2013, though is still lower than in 1999 when the top ten taxpayers represented almost a quarter of the City's tax base. Since 2013, however, the total taxable value of the top ten taxpayers in the City has increased.

In addition, payment on bonds for the acquisition and remediation of the Water Street property began in the late 1990s and account for 10% of the City's general fund budget. According to the City Manager's 2012-2017 Recovery Plan, the City could pay for few capital expenditure in that time period unless additional, new sources of funds could be found. In 2017, voters passed a 2.3-mill through 2031 to pay down the City's \$7.4 million debt on the Water Street property.⁶ Meanwhile, the City would like to sell the property and see development occur that meets the master plan goals. A biking and walking trail along the Huron River frontage, known as the River's Edge Trail, connects Riverside Park to the north with Waterworks Park to the south. It is a part of a 37-mile-long Border-to-Border Trail running through Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and adjacent communities. The River's Edge Trail is a protected trail that will not be sold as part of Water Street.

Economics Summary

The following factors are key to the Master Plan:

- The economy of the City of Ypsilanti has fundamentally shifted in the past decade, shifting the economy from industrial to property management and knowledge-based sectors.
- Portions of the City, both property and population, have been left behind due to economic change. Instead of working in factories, residents with lower educational attainment work in retail or service sector jobs, often

outside the City, often for low wages. Many need bus or transit to get to work.

- The commercial market is underserved, showing a need not only for more businesses but also for marketing of the community as a place to shop to the larger region and targeted nearby populations, EMU students and staff and visitors to St. Joseph Ann Arbor Hospital.
- Several sectors are building momentum in the City of Ypsilanti - small manufacturing, creative economy, renewable energy, and local food. Each one has the potential to create dozens of jobs, not the hundreds in manufacturing previously. However, these are local entities with a commitment to the City. The challenge is to foster growth of these sectors despite the physical constraints of the City’s land; very few properties are suitable for large scale operations.
- The City budget has suffered due to several reasons. Originally, the economic shift and ongoing debt played a role. But more recent challenges include the inability for city property tax revenues to reflect the increases in property value, post-recession, due to the Headlee Amendment and Proposal A.

TRANSPORTATION

The street and park structure of the City today was laid out in the early 20th century. However, the function of streets changed in the mid 20th century with the creation of one-way streets when an interchange for Ypsilanti was constructed at Interstate 94 and Huron. At the time, a large workforce commuted to the factories in the southern end of the City quickly in and out. Today, those factories either no longer exist or employ a small percentage of the workers than in the past.

In addition, the transportation options available within Ypsilanti are changing. Washtenaw County is planning for rapid bus service along Washtenaw Avenue, increasing the capacity and decreasing the travel time along the most heavily travelled bus line for The Ride.

The Border-to-Border (B2B) trail that spans Washtenaw County has completed 35 miles of the Huron River Greenway connecting Dexter, Ann Arbor, and Ypsilanti along the Huron River through paved, ADA compliant, shared-use pathways. In 2015, the B2B trail was incorporated in Michigan’s Iron Belle Trail, a network 2,000 miles long that spans the state.

Figure 10: Non-motorized Deficiencies, 2013

Sidewalk	Bike facility		
	Off-roadway	Roadway	
Existing miles	98.49	5.55	3.71
Deficient miles	23.37	n/a	39.33
Deficient %	19.2%		

Data Source: Washtenaw Area Transportation Study

Non-Motorized Network

Ypsilanti’s historically compact core and existing sidewalk network make the city generally friendly to non-motorized traffic like bicycles, pedestrians, and wheelchair users. Over the past decade, this has been improved upon by several efforts:

- The City has participated in the County’s Greenway Advisory Committee and regional “Border to Border Trail” (B2B) effort.
- Bike lanes have been added to several streets during resurfacing projects.
- Sidewalk curb ramps are being upgraded to ADA standards throughout the city.
- Bike racks have been installed in Depot Town, the Historic Downtown, and West Cross.

The 2006 Washtenaw Area Transportation Systems (WATS) Non-motorized Plan quantified the city’s non-motorized accessibility to be over 80% of the city’s roadway miles. The plan concluded that the City provided for pedestrians adequately, but that a much higher portion of bicycle needs were not met (see Figure 11). Since this analysis was completed, no major progress has been made to reduce those deficiencies.

Many of the City’s efforts, while positive, have been done on an ad hoc, disconnected basis, occasionally leading to problems. Bike lanes on First Avenue, for example, were created during a resurfacing project without ample coordination with other projects or communication with the residents, leading to their later removal in favor of a parking lane.

In 2010, the City adopted a non-motorized plan with a more comprehensive treatment of non-motorized transportation policies and infrastructure – including

the incorporation of deficiencies identified in the county-wide non-motorized plan developed by WATS – and the Planning Commission created a Non-Motorized Transportation Subcommittee to guide its implementation. Currently, the non-motorized plan is being updated. In 2011, the City passed a Complete Streets Ordinance, which requires non-motorized components be considered as part of any road project.

Transit & Regional Transportation

Due to the high percentage of renters, young population and recent trends from automobile use either by choice or economic need, regional transportation is essential to the long-term stability, growth and prosperity of Ypsilanti. Be it rail or bus, Ypsilanti is a leader in participation and further development of a regional transportation system within Washtenaw County and the Detroit metropolitan area.

The City has long been a user of public transit, in past years purchasing service from the Ann Arbor Area Transit Authority (AAATA), and more recently becoming a member of the Authority, now called The Ride. Prior to 2013, the City operated under a purchased of service agreement. In 2010, in response to budget pressures, the City passed a voter-approved charter amendment to dedicate funding to the purchase of transit service. In 2013 the City was added as a charter member. As a new member of The Ride, no purchase agreement is required with the dedicated millage being passed along to The Ride.

The Ride has conducted long-range planning for the county beginning with a 30 year plan drafted in 2010. In 2014, voters passed a 0.7 mill tax to support AAATA services, and in 2018, renewed the millage with 83% support. As of 2017, ridership numbers hit 6.9 million trips that year after the millage helped increase services by 8,500 service hours in Ypsilanti.⁷ The millage will be levied through 2024; it is important that transit services continue. As of 2019, four routes run between Ann Arbor and the downtown Ypsilanti Transit Center; four more run from downtown into Ypsilanti Township.

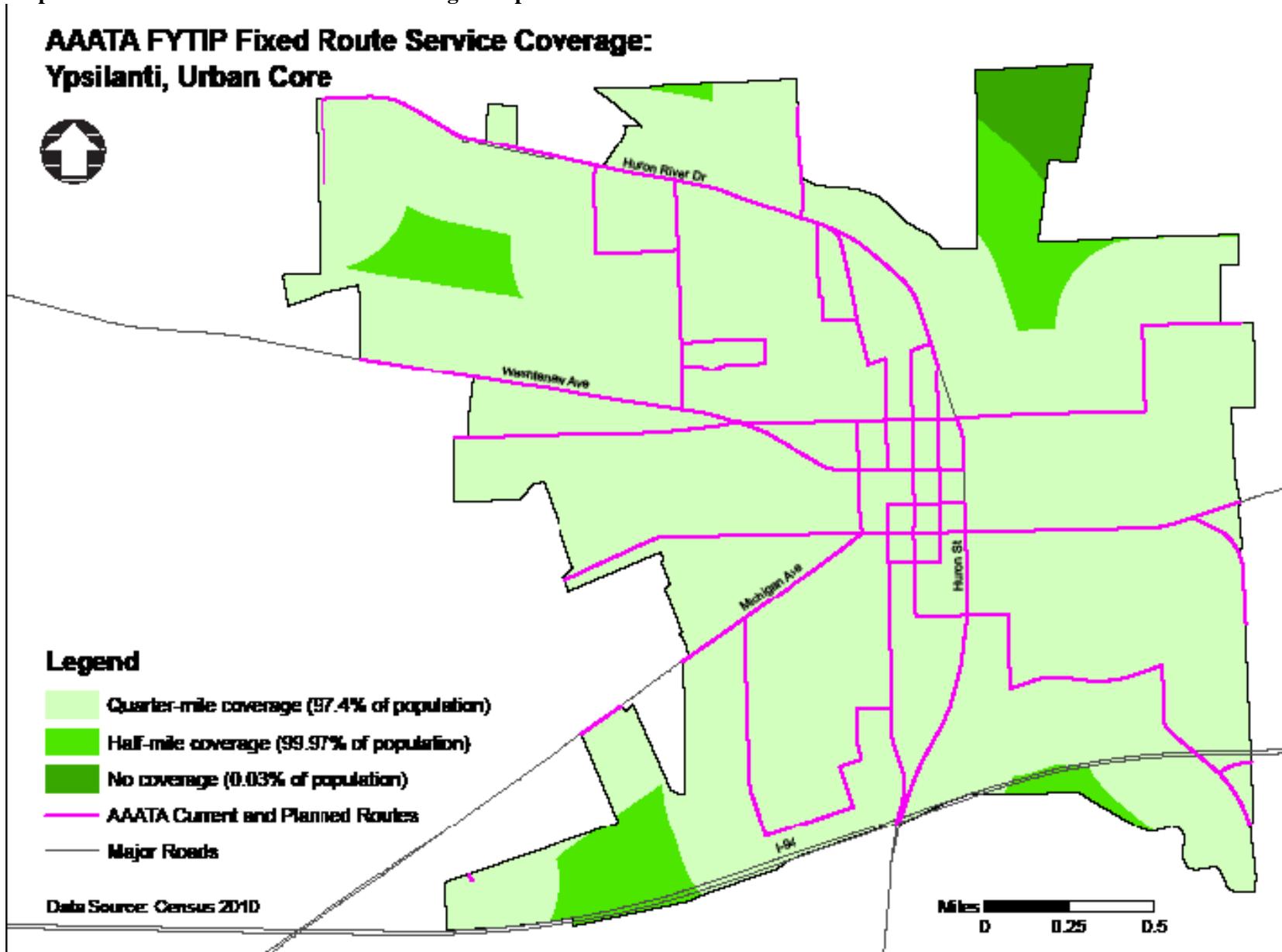
Eastern Michigan University additionally contracts with The Ride for a circulator shuttle around the main campus and to the business school in the Historic Downtown. EMU uses a separate transportation provider to provide shuttle service from a west-side parking lot on Hewitt to the main campus.

This portion of The Ride’s system saw a 10% increase in ridership from 2002 to 2009. Since becoming a regional bus service, The Ride no longer keeps track of individual jurisdiction’s ridership as it can be easily skewed. An increase in ridership is consistent with The Ride’s system-wide ridership trends, but also reflects state-wide and national trends of growing local and inter-city transit use. These trends, based on cost-consciousness around rising fuel prices, increased environmental awareness, and other factors, have contributed to interest in new modes of transportation. The map “AAATA Fixed Route Service Coverage in Ypsilanti” shows that about 97% of households are within a quarter-mile from one of The Ride’s routes.

The City of Ypsilanti was selected to be a test community for Miovision, a company devoted to developing smart cities. Miovision uses technology to monitor and collect transportation data; and as a test community, Ypsilanti now has access to this data. Figure 12 provides a summary of five Ypsilanti intersections and the various transportation modes using them. Based on this initial data, motor vehicles continue to be the dominant mode of transportation, though there is a noticeably larger number of pedestrians at both the LeForge Road and Huron River Drive intersection (4.62% mode share) and the Oakwood Street and Huron River Drive intersection (3.69% mode share), perhaps indicating priority intersections for improving pedestrian amenities.

When discussing ride-sharing apps in the subsequent *Cars, Trucks, and Streets* section, it is important to note that ride-sharing cannot fully replace transit as ride-sharing is not as accommodating to persons with children, persons with disabilities, and persons without smartphones. Ride-sharing, car-sharing, bike-sharing, etc. should not be intended to replace transit.

Map 10: AAATA Fixed Route Service Coverage in Ypsilanti



In the near term, Ypsilanti and the other communities along Washtenaw Avenue are considering improved transit service along that corridor, beginning with additional bus service and potentially growing into bus rapid transit or light rail service. Known as the “Reimagine Washtenaw” project, the upgrade would include key elements such as transit signal priority, queue jump lanes, limited stops, and super stop stations. If the full bus rapid transit were implemented, it is expected to cut 19 minutes off the trip from Ypsilanti to Ann Arbor.⁸

While Ypsilanti has not had passenger rail service since the 1980s, work is underway on Ann Arbor to Detroit commuter rail service that may propose a stop in Depot Town, along with service to Detroit Metro Airport and Dearborn. The system would also provide access from Ypsilanti to Amtrak service on the Chicago-Detroit-Pontiac line, which is planned for improvements as part of the Midwest High-Speed Rail Initiative. It is important to continue to consider future opportunities for both commuter and passenger rail.

Cars, Trucks, and Streets

Ypsilanti has seen an overall decrease in traffic over the past couple decades, due in large part to major industrial employers reducing their workforce or closing. The exception is the northern part of the City, where growth on the EMU and St. Joseph Mercy Hospital campuses has contributed to increased traffic. The County and Region have experienced a decrease in Vehicle Miles Travel (VMT) between 2002 and 2012. Long-range modeling done as part of the WATS 2045 Regional Transportation Plan forecasts an increasing population and employment opportunities which means an increase in traffic and congestion over the next quarter century. In a high growth scenario, vehicle miles traveled during peak morning and evening hours could increase by 30% and 33%, respectively after the addition of an estimated 2,000,000 more daily vehicle miles traveled. The encouraging news that 48.8% of trips made in 2015 were between zero to three miles,⁹ which means that improvements to nonmotorized infrastructure and increased bus service could help to remove vehicles making short trips from the road.

While traffic counts are done sporadically and are individually difficult to draw conclusions from, a sampling of recent and past counts from around the city shows that traffic volumes have been stagnant or declining somewhat over the 1990s and 2000s (see Figure 11). As noted, increases in traffic are largely attributed to the

main traffic generators in the area, primarily Eastern Michigan University but also Washtenaw Community College and St. Joseph’s hospital. Washtenaw County, as part of the Reimagine Washtenaw effort, is working with these institutions and others in the area to look at Traffic Demand Management practices that could further reduce vehicle miles traveled through programmatic changes and behavioral shifts to car-pooling, transit usage, walking, biking, etc.

Some of these trends are captured in Figure 11 that shows that most of the 19 intersections have reduced traffic volumes when compared to counts from five to ten years ago, and only modest increases in the remaining six. Interestingly, the newer counts would include trips made from ride-sharing apps, despite research showing that in larger cities ride-sharing increases congestion. There is little consensus on how ride-sharing apps affect car ownership but there is speculation that the original ownership model is less popular among youth. Financially, in some cases it is more affordable to forgo monthly payments for pay-as-you-go rides.¹⁰ However, because the data is collected by private companies, cities are somewhat in the dark about the extent to which these services are being used. This is trend worth watching closely because it may help determine how streets are shaped, for example, the development of drop-off and pick-up zones as opposed to parking lot requirements. Car-sharing, electric vehicle charging and bike parking can be practical first steps in terms of existing infrastructure. The zoning ordinance was updated to incentivize these alternatives, as Walkable Urban Districts offer parking requirement discounts for including such infrastructure.

In recent years, traffic safety in Ypsilanti has improved both on in terms of number of crashes at major intersections and relative to the Washtenaw County region. Some of this may be attributed to flat or declining traffic volumes in the city, compared to growing volumes elsewhere in the County. As shown in Figure 13, the City has five of the forty highest-ranked intersections in Washtenaw County in terms of annual average crash rate. Since the adoption of the Master Plan in 2013, the top two have shifted only slightly in their relative ranking, however the top three thru five have significantly fallen, implying these intersections have become safer relative to the rest of the County. Hamilton St. and Huron St. remain common occurrences as one-way streets making this ranking.

Figure 11: Intersection Traffic Volumes

Street	Location	Year	Daily Volume	Comparison Year	Comparison Volume	% change	Annual % change
Michigan Avenue	East of Huron	2015	21,800	2010	21,325	2.23%	0.44%
	East of Hamilton (downtown)	2018	19,100	2009	22,484	-15.05%	-1.80%
	SW of Congress	2017	14,000	2006	12,585	11.24%	0.97%
Washtenaw Avenue	NW of Mansfield	2018	26,000	2007	26,783	-2.92%	-0.27%
	NW of Oakwood	2018	25,300	2004	26,336	-3.93%	-0.29%
Prospect Street	South of Maus/Spring	2017	7,300	2005	9,913	-26.36%	-2.52%
	South of Holmes	2017	8,400	2005	8,325	0.90%	0.07%
Cross Street	West of River (Depot Town)	2015	13,500	2006	10,246	31.76%	3.11%
	West of Wallace	2006	8,180	1994	n/a	16.00%	-1.30%
Harriet / Spring	East of Hawkins	2017	5,600	2005	4,850	15.46%	1.21%
	West of Huron	2017	11,300	2006	13,619	-17.03%	-1.68%
Hamilton	South of Harriet	2018	12,300	2009	15,511	-20.70%	-2.54%
Huron	South of Harriet	2018	16,600	2009	16,059	3.37%	0.37%
Leforge	North of Huron River Drive	2015	7,600	2006	12,906	-41.11%	-5.71%
Huron River Drive	East of Hewitt	2016	14,100	2008	16,519	-14.64%	-1.96%
River	North of Michigan	2004	4,095	1994	n/a	14.00%	-1.40%
Mansfield	South of Cross	2004	3,907	1994	n/a	14.00%	1.40%
First	South of Michigan	2004	4,600	2004	n/a	-2.00%	-0.40%
Grove	North of Spring	2012	2,300	2004	2,702	-14.88%	-1.99%

Italicized cells indicate that base year is approximate
Source: SEMCOG

Figure 12: Intersections and Mode Share Data for Select Ypsilanti Intersections

Huron Street and Cross Street		
	Total	Mode Share
Pedestrians	304	1.48%
Bike	78	0.38%
Road / Bike Lane	29	
Crosswalk	49	
E-Scooters	0	0%
Road / Bike Lane	0	
Crosswalk	0	
Vehicles	20,158	98.14%
Passenger Vehicles	19,695	
Heavy Trucks	463	
Oakwood Street and Huron River		
	Total	Mode Share
Pedestrians	716	3.69%
Bike	39	0.20%
Road / Bike Lane	10	
Crosswalk	29	
E-Scooters	1	0.01%
Road / Bike Lane	0	
Crosswalk	1	
Vehicles	18,628	96.10%
Passenger Vehicles	18,221	
Heavy Trucks	407	

Leforge Road and Huron River Drive		
	Total	Mode Share
Pedestrians	985	4.62%
Bike	53	0.25%
Road / Bike Lane	20	
Crosswalk	33	
E-Scooters	0	0%
Road / Bike Lane	0	
Crosswalk	0	
Vehicles	20,275	95.13%
Passenger Vehicles	19,827	
Heavy Trucks	448	
Hamilton Street and Washtenaw		
	Total	Mode Share
Pedestrians	454	2.45%
Bike	31	0.17%
Road / Bike Lane	6	
Crosswalk	25	
E-Scooters	1	0.01%
Road / Bike Lane	1	
Crosswalk	0	
Vehicles	18,074	97.38%
Passenger Vehicles	17,559	
Heavy Trucks	515	

Huron Street and Michigan Avenue		
	Total	Mode Share
Pedestrians	915	2.41%
Bike	70	0.18%
Road / Bike Lane	24	
Crosswalk	46	
E-Scooters	1	0%
Road / Bike Lane	0	
Crosswalk	1	
Vehicles	37,026	97.41%
Passenger Vehicles	35,696	
Heavy Trucks	1,330	

Figure 13: Annual Crash Rate, 2014-2018

City Rank	County Rank	Intersection	Avg. # Crash Rate
1	3	Huron St. at Michigan Ave.	34.2
2	12	Washtenaw Ave. at Hewitt Rd.	29.0
3	21	Hamilton St. at Michigan Ave.	25.2
4	29	Huron River Dr. at Oakwood St.	19.0
5	40	Hamilton St. at Harriet St.	17.0

Data Source: SEMCOG

Transportation Summary

The following transportation factors have implications for policies in the Master Plan:

- The non-motorized network has a number of deficiencies. Public input during the process asked for better bicycle lanes and access throughout the City.
- More transit riders are using The Ride bus routes in the City. The City should continue to support and strengthen- and if possible, expand- the service.
- The City should implement designs for streets to be safe and comfortable for pedestrians, focusing on intersections with higher pedestrian counts.
- Daily train service, while the time line is uncertain and likely several years off, would have major positive impacts for Ypsilanti’s core. More demand for housing would be expected within a quarter mile radius, an easy 10-minute walk, of the train depot.
- The volume of vehicle traffic and the number of crashes has decreased. Improvements should continue to make streets safer but also should recognize that cyclists and pedestrians use the roadways as well, and not default to vehicular improvements over those for non-motorized users.
- Crashes are concentrated on the one-way streets. The speed limit of some of those streets were recently raised by the State of Michigan. The past Master Plan recommended these streets return to two-way traffic, with phasing of the work taking place. See Chapter 5- Transportation for details of the phasing approach.

Chapter 4 – City Framework

“We are not the suburbs.” – Proposed Guiding Value at Focus Group

This Master Plan is a fundamental shift to view the City as an urban system with a framework of interconnected parts, shown on the Framework Map (Map 11). The map, taking the place of a future land use map in a traditional plan, also provides guidance to the community and developers to the context of the built environment. The Framework Map will set the design context and guide the development form of the city through form based regulations. It has centers, corridors, districts and neighborhoods that include unique building forms within the City of Ypsilanti summarized below:

Centers are the heart beats of the City – downtown, Depot Town and Cross Street adjacent to the EMU campus. Each area has buildings built up to the sidewalk and a variety of uses - retail, restaurants, services, office, civic, and residential. They are places where people walk, gather, shop, exchange and meet.

The plan proposes to build on the strengths and improve the weaknesses of these areas to make them great places. Hamilton, Huron, Cross Street and Washtenaw Avenue are proposed to become two-way streets, putting pedestrians and cyclists on even footing with automobiles. Future ordinances will preserve the architecture of these areas, while requiring natural surveillance to improve safety. Policies will also enable the continued re-use and redevelopment of buildings, increasing their sustainability. Specific plans for each area are shown in Chapter 6, including design plans for Depot Town to prepare for the planned commuter rail station. A redevelopment concept plan and design standards for the Water Street area are in Chapter 10.

Neighborhoods are where homes are clustered together, along with small-scale other uses that serve the people that live there (such as a corner store, a school, church or library). Each of the dozens of neighborhoods in Ypsilanti has its own character, influenced by the size and architecture of the buildings, the layout of the streets, parks and the people who live there. Neighborhoods fall into two categories, discussed in Chapter 7:

Central Neighborhoods are among the oldest in Ypsilanti. Initially oriented on the Huron River, they are built on a grid street network connected to the adjacent business districts. They border downtown,

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Depot Town and EMU. These neighborhoods have a range of residential building types, with churches, schools, stores and gas stations intermixed. Around the railroad, industrial uses are mixed into the neighborhood.

Under this plan, the mix of uses will follow the pattern of current zoning. However, the building’s form would be regulated, including those outside of the historic district, to maintain the character of the area. Regulations for two-family and multiple-family options would be collapsed into clear rules based on the number of housing units- with categories for duplexes, group living arrangements, 2-4 units and 5 or more units. When developing the form-based code zoning, the building types, uses and setbacks will be calibrated to preserve the character of these neighborhoods.

Outlying Neighborhoods were built in the middle or later part of the 20th century and were designed as areas for a single type of housing, either single-family or multi-family. These neighborhoods are adjacent to a corridor but the street network is designed to carry traffic into the neighborhood, not through it. Any non-residential uses, other than schools or parks, are located at the edges, not embedded within the neighborhood.

These neighborhoods will have uses limited to the type of residential for which they were built. In some areas, like the Heritage Park neighborhood in the southwest part of the City, zoning would be changed so that duplexes and group homes would no longer be allowed by right. As many of these areas have aging populations, the City needs to be concerned about the stability of these neighborhoods as demographics shift. Accessory Dwelling Units, for example, can be an affordable and accessible housing type for the aging population.

Corridors are the streets that connect the City together, and sometimes divide it. They are the arteries of transportation into, around and through the City. Two types of corridors exist in Ypsilanti:

Historic Corridors connect the centers of the City with each other and the surrounding neighborhoods. They are dominated by large, historic homes now used in a variety of ways – residences, office, retail. Houses of worship and other civic buildings also line these corridors, interspersed with smaller homes. The transportation plan sees restoration of two-way traffic to the one-way historic corridors of Huron, Hamilton and Cross. It also proposes the extension of River Street through the Water Street redevelopment area to Factory in the next twenty years. Uses will remain flexible allowing the historic buildings to accommodate changing markets and traffic patterns.

General Corridors are streets that connect the City to neighboring municipalities and the centers. Many of the corridors – Ecorse, East Michigan, West Michigan and along many of these corridors no longer accommodate the larger 21st century footprint of suburban style buildings with parking in front and lawns on all sides. The new pattern proposed in this Plan will allow parking on the street and require buildings to be closer to the street; with minimal yards, lots will have more buildable area for residential, commercial and office uses mixed throughout.

Other corridors – Huron River Drive and Harriet – have one type of building on one side of the street and a distinctly different situation on the other side of the street. Future regulations would require, where possible, the two sides of the street mirror one another. In twenty years, the dignity of Harriet Street should be restored to a walkable shopping district for the adjoining neighborhoods. Huron River Drive should become a point of integration between the campus of Eastern Michigan and the City. Addition of sidewalks, crosswalks and bicycle lanes are essential to transitioning this street from a dividing line geared only to move vehicles to a place where the City and campus meet seamlessly. Chapter 8 provides more detail for each of these areas.

Districts are parts of the city dedicated to a single type of activity, like Eastern Michigan University, the office and medical area on Towner, and the industrial areas of the City in the south. The challenge is to use the street network design to

integrate them into the City while assuring that students, faculty, workers and suppliers can reach their destinations easily.

Eastern Michigan University’s campus, which is not within the regulatory jurisdiction of the City, will be preserved and improved by joint planning and cooperation between the City and EMU, as part of a Campus master plan process. The confusing confluence of Cross and Washtenaw is proposed to become the front door for the EMU campus.

The office and medical area clustered on Towner in the eastern part of the City is also an asset that can be better integrated into the physical environment. Future policies will aim to preserve and enhance the buildings, while making walking, biking and taking transit to these offices easier.

The cemetery in the northern part of the City will be preserved.

The industrial areas in the south of the City represent the best hopes for a revitalized employment area. The industrial park in the southwest corner of the city has no vacancies, but could be reconfigured to accommodate additional businesses. The industrial property in the southeast corner is vacant or underutilized. The former Motorwheel site is also a potential job center. Industrial areas around the railroad provide jobs and could be places for additional workshops. Chapter 10 details plans and options to attract job centers to these properties.

ZONING – FORM-BASED CODE

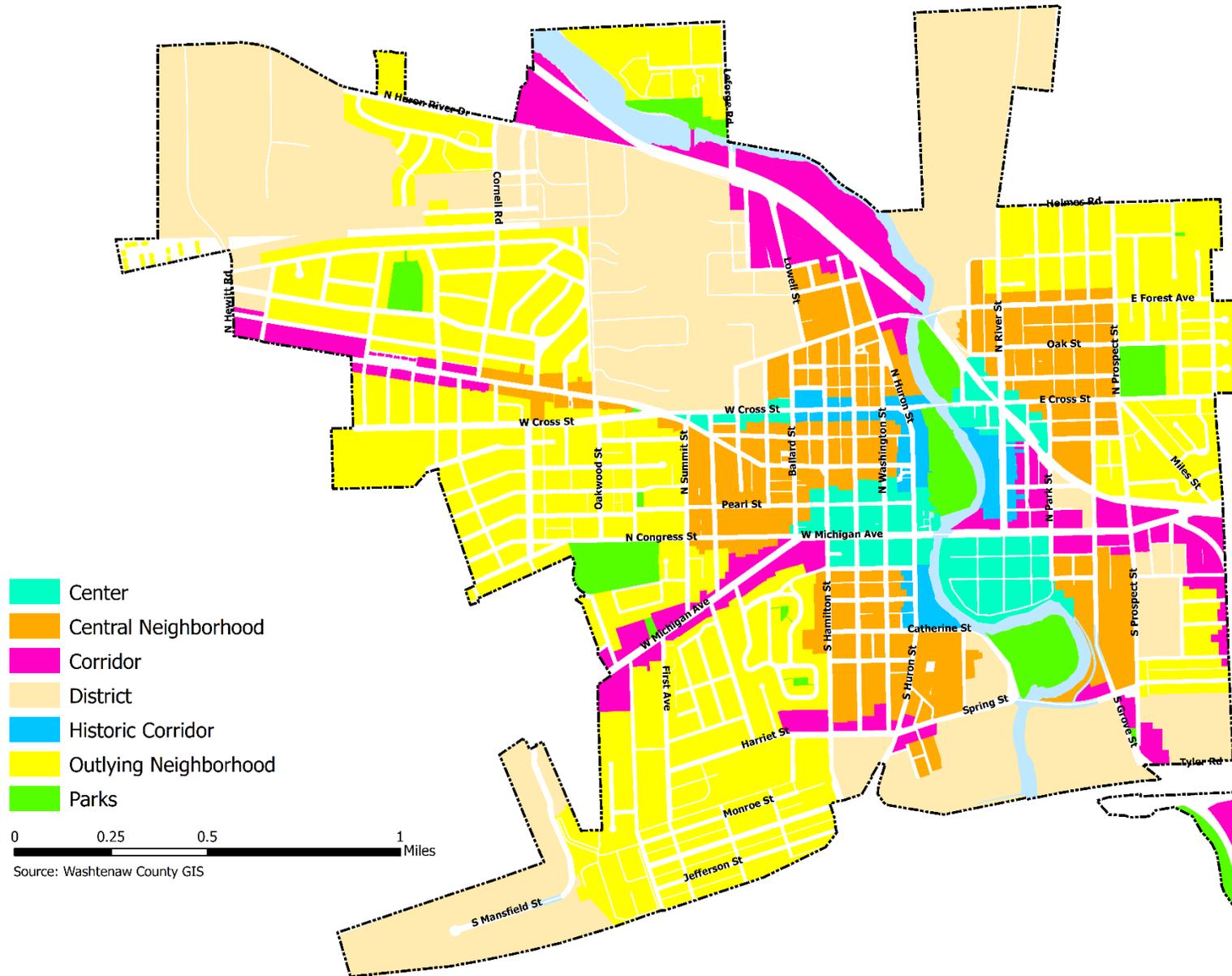
The chief mechanism for implementing the Master Plan in Michigan is the Zoning Ordinance. In 2019, the City completed a zoning ordinance update that was user-friendly and implemented form-based elements; the use of illustrations clarified technical text and prescriptive regulations were translated into standards that emphasized design standards to address building orientation, parking location, architectural treatments, and building typologies that are better suited to its context. In that way, more space was made for mixed-use developments while

older neighborhood's with highly separated uses were preserved but uses and design elements were expanded in those zones where practical.

In contrast to the previous zoning ordinance, Ypsilanti's updated ordinance focuses on how development relates to the context of the surrounding community, especially the relationships between buildings and the street, pedestrians and vehicles, and public and private spaces. The Walkable Urban Districts are the ordinance's form-based characterization, as these districts especially emphasize building typologies, building orientation, and site standards. While uses are still regulated in these districts, more strict design standards are provided here to ensure compatibility with the existing neighborhood.

DRAFT

Map 11: City Framework Map



DRAFT

Chapter 5 – Transportation

“Reward the short trip” – Consultant Team member during Discover Charrette

The streets of the City were laid out in the late 19th and early 20th century. The transportation structure changed in the mid 20th century with the creation of one-way streets with the interchange with Interstate 94 and Huron. A large workforce moved in and out of the City daily at that time. Today, the streets do not handle the same type or volume of traffic. Meanwhile, the one-way streets are among the most dangerous in Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County.

In addition, the transportation within Ypsilanti is changing. The communities along the Washtenaw corridor are planning for rapid bus service along Washtenaw Avenue, increasing the capacity and frequency of the most heavily travelled bus line for Ann Arbor Transportation Authority, called The Ride. Four time a day commuter rail service connecting Detroit to Ann Arbor is anticipated to begin in 2016. Several bicycle paths and lanes, including the Border-to-Border trail spanning Washtenaw County, have been constructed or are on the drawing board, to provide safe routes for cyclists.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Map 12 shows the proposed transportation improvements for the City. These changes were developed during the two charrettes held in the Spring of 2013 and then refined through focus groups in the summer of that year. They represent a twenty-year vision for the transportation network of the City.

PRIORITIES

Street changes or improvements are usually expensive and time-consuming. The transportation changes proposed here are daunting for a small city with fiscal challenges. With that in mind, the following values should guide prioritization of funds and staff time for transportation efforts:

Reward the short trip

Any street network change should facilitate the walk between neighborhoods, bike to work in the City or bus trip or car ride across town. It should not help regional through-travelers to the detriment of those traveling within the city.

Follow the money, and be ready for opportunities

Funding is usually available for on-going initiatives, such as resurfacing, underground utility work that digs up the street, development projects, etc. The City should pursue grant funding with match requirements within its budget as well as creative partnerships to advance the goals of this plan. If funding is available for one project or idea but not another, the City should be flexible to advance its goals and projects within the spirit of this plan.

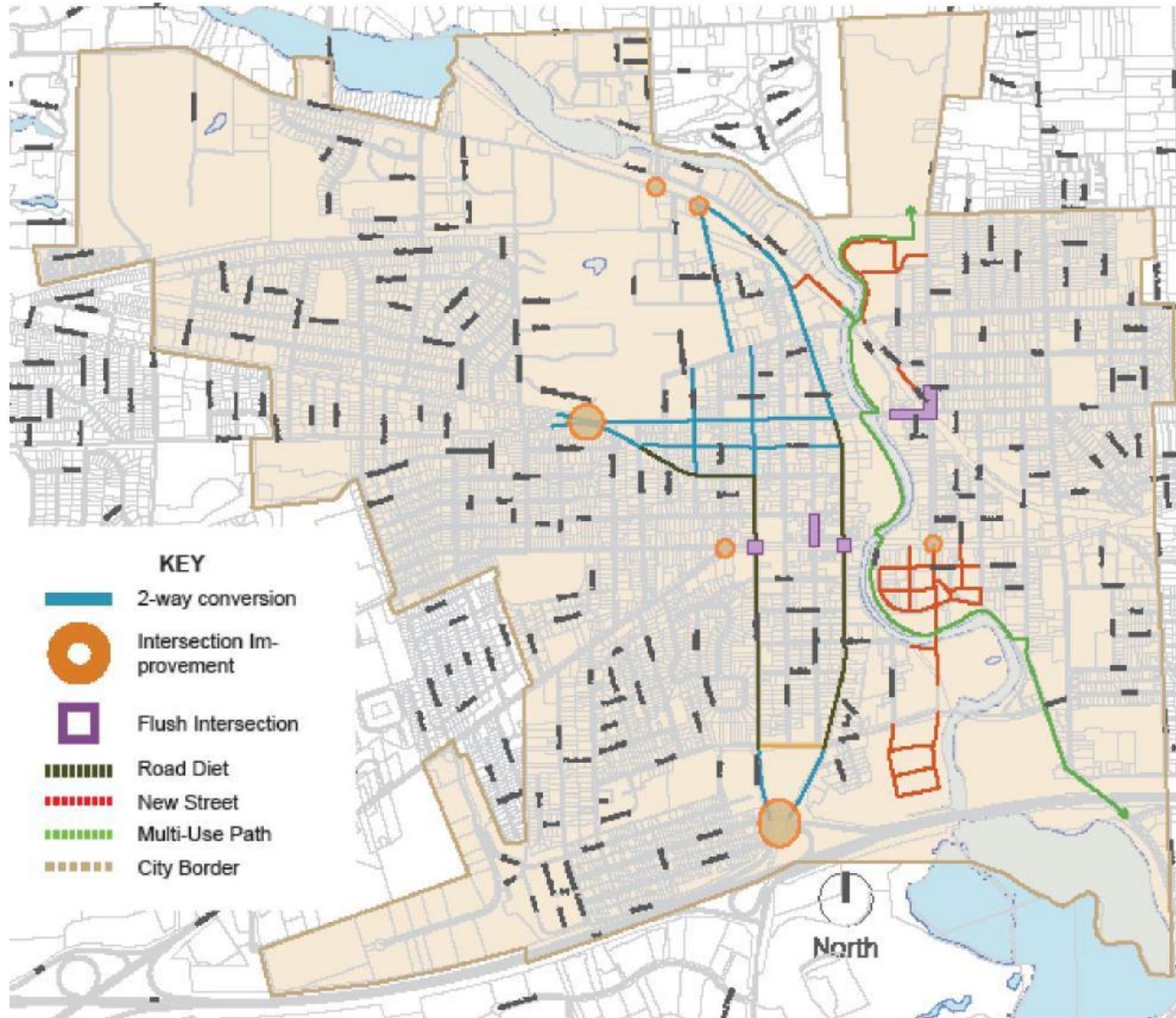
Make the streets better, not wider

City resources should not be used to add turn lanes, widen roads, or other means of conventionally fighting congestion in the City, when other options are available. Instead, spend City money, grants, State and Federal dollars on adding value to the place, the walkability, the aesthetics and making the streets safe. A possible exception to this rule is the conversion of a travel lane to a turn lane with the conversion of a 4-lane road to three lanes.

If car-carrying capacity is needed, it can be achieved by:

- adding new, two-lane, two-way streets to the network;
- making connections in the network that were previously severed;
- shortening trip lengths by reducing circuitous routing (i.e., restoring two-way operation, removing turn prohibitions, breaking up super-blocks);
- shortening trip lengths by adding density and rich mix of land uses in the downtown and centers; and converting automobile trips into walking, cycling, and transit trips by all of the means above plus traffic calming, building regulations that make a comfortable environment for people as well as cars, and building complete streets that are comfortable for vehicular and non-automobile modes of transportation.

Map 12: Transportation Project Map



Design with the community, not for it

When a project has been funded and is on the drawing board, the engineers and designers should talk with the community about options and suggestions before the design is final. The people using the streets everyday have valuable insight and should be included early on in the process, as mandated by the City's Complete Streets Ordinance. The public engagement process should be updated with lessons learned by each project.

TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

The projects shown on Map 12 were developed during the two charrettes held in March and April of 2013. The projects were later vetted by the community through postings on Facebook and focus groups. These projects are described in detail below. The suggested phasing is based on a combination of expert advice and community backing. They fall into five categories: city-initiated projects, Historic Downtown projects, projects built as part of new developments, and street policy changes.

CITY-INITIATED PROJECTS

The City will decide through its Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), required by the State of Michigan, what project to move forward first. Projects for the next five years are listed below with descriptions in order of priority, as suggested by the consultant team and then advised by community input:

Coordination of pedestrian-bike connection across the I-94 interchanges at Huron and Hamilton

WATS facilitates collaboration among partner communities and stakeholders to formalize plans for a pedestrian-bike connection across the highway. City staff will coordinate efforts to ensure that they are compatible with and without the proposed roundabout at Harriet to facilitate the return to two-way function of Huron and Hamilton. During the Summer 2013 focus groups, residents felt a pedestrian connection over I-94 was a priority for completion in the next five years. Many walk or bike to the shopping, parks and other facilities in Ypsilanti Township and find the trip treacherous. [The city is currently working on a Transportation Alternatives Program grant with Ypsilanti Township and the Michigan Department of Transportation \(MDOT\) to start this project.](#)

Cross St. and Washtenaw Ave. as part of the Re-Imagine Washtenaw Plan

The confluence of the one-way streets of Cross Street and Washtenaw Avenue at the southern edge of the EMU campus is one of the most confusing intersections in Ypsilanti. Due to the wide roadway, pedestrian crossing is dangerous. In order to create a safer, more appealing place, the transportation plan recommends the separation of the two streets, and returning each to two-way function (see Figure 19 in the next chapter). [While this remains a long term goal, a nearer goal is to consider squaring-off the West Cross and Washtenaw intersection and eliminating the slip lanes, to create better crossing and bus infrastructure. This should be coordinated with the AAATA.](#)

[Proposed improvements to Washtenaw from Normal Street to Ballard Street include parking on the north side, and then Washtenaw will return to a three-lane road from Ballard Street to Hamilton Street.](#)

Reimagine Washtenaw is a cooperative planning and transportation effort between four jurisdictions and multiple transportation agencies to transform the Washtenaw Corridor between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti by improving mass transportation, providing safe bicycle and pedestrian networks, rethinking land use, and creating coordinated standards that transform the corridor from a necessary but unpleasant experience, to a desirable, safe, and useful one. The incremental results of this work will not only create a highly-functioning, multi-modal corridor, with sense of place, but also facilitate public investment, thereby increasing property values over time by attracting new private investment.

Each local jurisdiction, Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti Township, and Pittsfield Township, is working toward uniform standards in regard to providing sidewalks, bicycle lanes, on-street parking where appropriate, and related land use standards that will put redevelopment on a pedestrian scale, with pedestrian facilities throughout the corridor. The transportation agencies, The Ride, Michigan Department of Transportation, Washtenaw County Road Commission, and Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) are working together on a long-term concept for road design and right-of-way requirements that will allow for the bicycle and pedestrian improvements, on-street parking where appropriate, with the potential for a dedicated transit lane or light-rail in the long term.

As part of the 2013 Right-of Way study facilitated by Washtenaw County on behalf of the local jurisdictions, preferred street segments are being developed for the entire corridor. Future use scenarios were also determined, and many recommendations are based on traffic volume reductions that are expected to be gained through land use changes, traffic demand management practices to be adopted by major area employers, and related transportation mode shifts. Throughout the entire corridor, innovative stormwater management systems, beautification and landscaping, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes are planned.

For the segment in the Ypsilanti city limits (from west to east), a narrow landscaped median is recommended from Hewitt to approximately the Courtland intersection to provide refuge for pedestrian crossings, improve aesthetics, and slow traffic. East of that a transition is recommended to reduce from four travel lanes to two, adding on-street parking on both sides of the street, until east of Oakwood. At that point, with the separation of Cross and Washtenaw and a change from one-way to two-way traffic, on-street parking may only fit on one side of the new streets. It is suggested that it stay on the north side of the street by EMU, to provide easy parking for administrators and students.

Return one way to two way streets

These streets are not friendly to pedestrians due to the high speed of vehicles. The one-way streets are also difficult to navigate and create longer trips for pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and motorists. A long term goal of returning the two-way functions of these streets would support the urban framework. To get to this long term goal, the City would like to take a phased approach.

Phase one could include “right-sizing” the roads for their vehicle capacity. Within these roads’ current configurations, some improvements can be made to improve nonmotorized and public transit access. For instance, on Hamilton Street starting at the intersection with Pearl Street, the right-most lane becomes a bicycle lane. The right-most lanes on Hamilton St. and Huron St. between Michigan and Harriet will become bicycle lanes. The right-most lane on Huron St. south of Harriet will become landscaping. In terms of Washtenaw Ave., the left-most lane will become on-street parking between Normal and Ballard.

Phase two could include the squaring up of curved intersections, and removal of slip lanes. For example, improving the West Cross and Washtenaw intersection would mean teeing up the intersection and providing additional green space and improved bus facilities in lieu of the slip lane.

Phase three would then be the two-way conversion. Long-term land use planning should be mindful of the possible excess of land that results from the conversions.

Figure 14: Roundabout for Two-Way Conversion



The drawing above shows a roundabout to facilitate two-way conversions of Huron and Hamilton, while maintaining safe access to Interstate-94. In this instance, cooperation with the existing warehousing facility would be needed. Based on online and in person feedback, the Ypsilanti community has a love/ hate relationship with roundabouts. Other design options exist and should be explored with community input when plans are being developed. Drawing by: AECOM

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN PROJECTS

Several of the transportation projects are located in the Historic Downtown. These projects could be carried out in conjunction with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and should be included in any updates of the DDA Tax Increment Financing Plan:

Raised intersections at Huron & Michigan Avenue and Hamilton & Michigan Avenue

While it was initially hoped that a ramp for pedestrians and a “table top” with a gentle incline to slow down vehicles, this is not currently plausible because it is not in the Michigan Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Washington Street as a flush festival street

Washington Street, between Pearl Street and Michigan Avenue, is often closed to traffic for concerts. Changing surfaces to a curbsless street would create more pedestrian friendly event space (see figure 15).

Figure 15: Curbsless “Festival” Street Example



Source: AECOM

NEW DEVELOPMENT

Many of these projects should be wrapped into anticipated development in adjacent areas, both private and public:

Cross Street and River Street in Depot Town as flush festival streets

With a new train stop near the intersection of Cross Street and River Street, more pedestrian and event activity is expected in Depot Town. Cross Street is already often used for events. Curbsless streets will help pedestrians navigate and ease of events. Drivers of vehicles know where the traffic lanes and pedestrian areas are by different types of materials, both color and texture, as well as bollards or other street furniture. The cost and design should be coordinated with the new train stop and incorporated into the DDA TIF plan.

Vehicular Bridge and extension of River Street to Factory

One of the most expensive proposals in the transportation plan is to extend River Street from Michigan Avenue across the Huron River to Factory Street, in coordination with the Water Street redevelopment. The extension would connect the Water Street redevelopment area to the highway but also link the neighborhoods in the southeastern part of the City with the Historic Downtown. Grant opportunities, coordination with developers and other funding resources should be explored.

New Streets in Redevelopment Areas

New streets are shown in several redevelopment areas. These streets should be built by the developer but in accordance with a structure and design that meets the community’s guiding value of walkability. The Water Street area is owned by the City, which could dictate street design as a condition of sale. For the other areas, zoning and design requirements should be updated to mandate a walkable street grid that connects and completes the existing streets.

Multi-Use Paths

Multi-use paths are shown connecting Railroad Street and the cemetery in the northern part of the city to Frog Island Park. Both areas are underutilized and could redevelop in the next ten years, especially when rail service begins. Pedestrian links to job centers in the districts should also be built. For example, the City holds an easement that could be used for a path to connect the industrial park

to the neighborhood to the southwest. Regulations should be updated to seek easements for proposed paths in these areas.

STREET POLICY CHANGES

Two areas of the City are proposed for overall changes to the streets to make them more accessible to everyone:

Harriet Street Road Diet

Harriet, from Huron to Perry, should become a two-lane street with on-street parking and sidewalks separated from the roadway. The City should change the design standards for Harriet. The City may want to consider a road diet continuing east on Harriet/Spring/ Factory/Maus but maintaining the ability of trucks to access the job district.

Leforge Road and Huron River Drive Reconfiguration

The intersection at Leforge and Huron River Drive is challenging to pedestrians but is where many EMU students live and walk to campus. Within a ten-minute walk are some of the largest multiple-family complexes in the City, a city park and

EMU campus. The City should make it a high priority work with EMU to create a vision for this area as an interconnection between the City and the University. Both the University and the City should then update their plans and policies for the area accordingly. The level of detail, coordination and community input warrant a planning process for this area specifically. If funding is available, an intense design process should be part of the five-year update to this plan.

PROGRAMS

Two programs are part of the master plan to increase the ability of people to use any modes of transportation they choose anywhere in the City:

- Expand car sharing program in the Historic Downtown. *Additionally, bikeshare could be programmed into the three core districts.*
- Create and publish maps with bicycle and walking routes in the City. *These may be interactive maps as well, accessed via the website or a mobile application.*

DRAFT

Chapter 6 – Centers

“The heartbeat of any community are place places to gather, especially on a social level.” -Facebook comment about post asking how to strengthen centers

There are three centers within the City of Ypsilanti – the Historic Downtown, Depot Town and Cross Street. They are active, synergistic places where people come together. Their historic buildings are the calling cards of the City. These are the places where people shop, go to school, live, come to work, visit, drop by City Hall, eat, gather and have fun. They host events which bring thousands of visitors each year and bring the City together as a community. All three centers are in the City’s Downtown Development Authority (DDA), supported by the tax increment revenue generated from the DDA.

PAST POLICIES

In adjusting to the shift from a manufacturing economy, Ypsilanti has focused on small business development, especially within the centers. The City has worked to maintain low barriers of entry for new businesses, and encourages entrepreneurs to start up businesses. However, new construction is limited due to physical constraints of the City, among other factors.

The City has successfully encouraged conversion of upper stories in the Historic Downtown and Depot Town into housing. The units brought onto the market in the past decade have been rented or sold quickly.

More recent economic development efforts have focused on placemaking as well as absorbing existing commercial and residential vacancies. Walkability, regional public transit, and work toward securing commuter train service on the Ann Arbor to Detroit Line are current transportation goals.

PUBLIC INPUT FROM 2013

Input about the centers was gathered in focus groups, the 4-day long Discover Charrette and through social media. Across the board, participants felt the centers were great places that should be preserved but could be improved in terms of cleanliness, safety and walkability.

Public input was positive about the Historic Downtown, with emphasis on preservation of the historic buildings. Participants felt the walkability and safety of the area could be improved, as well as the cleanliness of the streets and parking lots. Many participants felt there were too many bars and restaurants while others wanted these types of gathering place. The adult club was also a

source of tension, with many wanting it to be removed and others saying it should be left alone.

Depot Town was continually cited as an asset of Ypsilanti, to be built upon and improved. Many supported the opening of daily commuter rail service in Depot Town, with a few citing safety concerns such as how to accommodate long-term parking and improved bicycle and pedestrian connections.

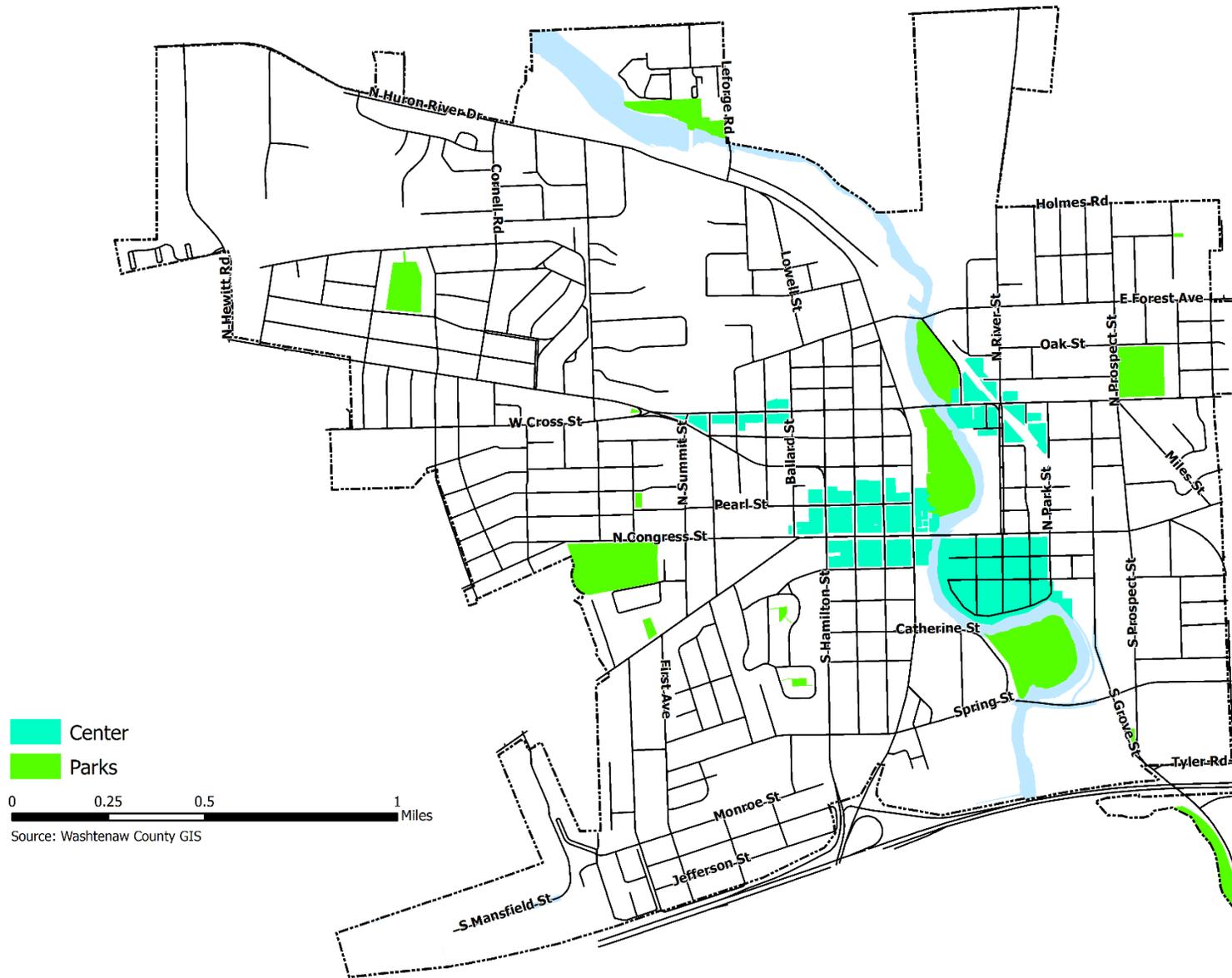
The Cross Street area was generally seen as positive, with much improvement in the past five to seven years. The focus group with EMU students requested that stores be open later at night, when they are most likely to use them. The intersection of Cross and Washtenaw as well as the one-way streets was seen as a barrier to pedestrians and vehicles easily navigating the area.

DATA

According the commercial analysis for this project, the centers are three strong commercial anchor locations that provide a wide range of specialty goods and services. The devoted resident base and healthy EMU market provide a strong customer base for these businesses. Market analysis completed for these areas by Hyett Palma in 2009 concluded that the Ypsilanti DDA area captures approximately 10%, or about \$121 million of the estimated region’s demand at \$1.1 billion annual demand. This study, now about a decade old, should be updated to determine if the DDA’s policies have been able to capture a greater of that demand.

These locations have limitations to growth, due to the historic building stock. Focus group participants described these as ideal locations for small to mid-sized operations that could fit a first-floor foot print of 2,000 – 4,000 square feet. Some businesses have been successful at expanding into neighboring storefronts, but the reality of growth is fairly limited for a major food store, entertainment complex or larger footprint a national clothing retailer would require. A few buildings with larger footprints are available - the Thompson Block in Depot Town as well as the Smith Furniture Building and the Pub 13 building in the Historic Downtown.

Map 13: Centers City Framework Map



POLICY UPDATE FROM 2013

Certain actions will apply to all three centers, in particular the form-based zoning. The following are expected in the Historic Downtown, Depot Town, and Cross Street:

Create building standards for centers that preserve their architecture - Completed

All three centers have unique, historic buildings that have been protected by the regulations of the historic district. In 2014, the zoning ordinance was passed with form-based zoning elements that require building location, story height, front door and window location to match the existing architecture, reinforcing existing patterns and the historic district regulations.

Finish Upper Stories - Ongoing

Upper story conversions in the Historic Downtown and Depot Town have been successful, bringing new residents. The zoning ordinance was updated to encourage private investment on upper story units, and in 2018, the DDA was awarded a MEDC facade grant for \$300,000 which has enabled them to improve properties according to historic guidelines. The City shall work to update its local and National Register historic district listings. Updated listings will expand the number of contributing buildings and afford greater opportunities for Historic Tax Credits in rehabilitations.

Allow renewable energy facilities on all buildings - Completed

The City has several buildings in the centers with solar panels and geothermal facilities, such as City Hall and the Ypsilanti Food Coop. The zoning ordinance was updated in 2014 to allow alternative energy (photovoltaic, geothermal, and wind) as an accessory use in every zone. The Historic District Commission has adopted alternative energy standards to guide the installation of such facilities on historic buildings.

Draft a business attraction plan for the centers - Ongoing

The City, Small Business and Technology Development Center, Ann Arbor SPARK, and the DDA should work together to create a process to guide business attraction for Downtown, Depot Town and Cross Street.

Encourage activity during the day and evening – Ongoing

A number of participants, especially EMU students and other youth, expressed a desire for opportunity in the City's centers during the evening as well as the day. Many felt there was not much available after hours except for bars. The DDA and the City should work together with existing businesses to expand their hours and factor the need for evening uses that are friendly to people of all ages into

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the business attraction plan. Changes should be communicated to EMU faculty, staff, and students who would be a big portion of patrons.

The City has updated its zoning to allow for a greater mix of uses that could draw people to its centers, and the DDA continues to work on business development through event sponsorship like First Fridays, Ypsi Pride, Festival of the Honey Bee, and Ypsi Glow.

Continue and expand the number, type and location of festivals and events - Ongoing

Events bring thousands of visitors and residents alike to the centers of Ypsilanti. If it can, the DDA and Ypsilanti Convention and Visitor's Bureau, supported by the City, should increase the number of events and make sure they occur across the City centers and in all four seasons. Options could include the use of College Place, other areas in and around EMU's campus, Frog Island and other large City parks as well as downtown streets. The City works with the Convention and Visitor's Bureau to market events and destinations in Ypsilanti. The city also passed a special events policy to enable more activity.

Create a marketing campaign for the City of Ypsilanti - Ongoing

Throughout the public engagement process, participants felt that the City had an undeserved reputation in the region as an unsafe place with not much to do. A marketing campaign, in conjunction with the Ypsilanti Visitors and Convention Bureau, was suggested as a five-year goal.

Install a way-finding system - Completed

The DDA, city of Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti township, and the Washtenaw County Convention and Visitor's Bureau installed unified wayfinding signage throughout the city and township to help visitors find places to shop and recreate.

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

Historic Downtown Ypsilanti is located at the intersection of M-12, the old Chicago Road, and the Huron River. The plan for downtown is to make it safer and maintain its diversity and sustainability. These following items, except for zoning changes, should be included as part of the update of the DDA's Tax Increment Financing Plan and pursued in conjunction with consensus of the business community downtown.

Increase walkability - Ongoing

The return of Huron and Hamilton to two-way streets will increase the walkability of the Historic Downtown by slowing traffic. The raised intersections on Michigan at Huron and Hamilton will also slow traffic and making crossing these intersections easier for pedestrians. Ypsilanti has completed a feasibility study and is in the public participation phase. The city has incorporated these projects in the Capital Improvement Plan and is coordinating with MDOT for assistance on completing this project.

Build curbless “festival” street on Washington - Ongoing

A curbless street on Washington, between Michigan Avenue and Pearl, would make set up and operation of outdoor concerts already occurring there easier. Most likely, more events could be held there, increasing the diversity of events and visitors to the downtown.

Use vacant storefronts for temporary retail uses - Ongoing

Any number of vacant storefronts diminish the vibrancy of downtown. Also, many entrepreneurs cannot afford to open a full scale operation. By defining a process to allow a “pop-up” store in vacant storefront, the City and the DDA have enabled this temporary use. However, it is still up to the property owner to decide how to use his/her building. The DDA does conduct outreach to landlords, but the effort continues to make this a consistent practice.

Maintain and expand transportation options, including improvements to the Ypsilanti Transit Center (YTC) - Ongoing

Bus service to the downtown should continue as well as the expansion of the car sharing service. The bus center should be treated as a hub of the downtown, with wayfinding, signs, and street furniture to make coming to the center an enjoyable experience as any other in the downtown. The increased ridership has put pressure on the YTC to accommodate users. The WATS Long Range Transportation plan

has made it a regional priority to update that space or to re-locate it where necessary to be a better functioning space.

DEPOT TOWN

Depot Town grew up around the intersection of the regional and inter-urban railroads and the Huron River. Similar to downtown in the size and age of buildings as well as land use, Depot Town covers a smaller area. It is a regional draw due to the restaurants and festivals held in the adjacent parks. When train service is secured, the area is expected to have more activity from commuters on foot, bicycle and car as well more development pressure. The Ride plans a connector bus route to the stop as well. The plan, shown on the following page is a transit-oriented design to integrate the train stop and increased activity into the fabric of Depot Town.

Maintain Depot Town as a place for the pedestrian first – Ongoing

Depot Town is a safe, walkable place in Ypsilanti. A curbless street is proposed on River Street to ease access for pedestrians, including those in wheelchairs or with baby strollers. Parking lots should be away from the street front, as shown in the concept plan.

Build curbless “festival” street on River and Cross – Ongoing

A curbless street on River and Cross Streets adjacent to the train platform would increase pedestrian accessibility and facilitate events.

Create a public space at new train station – Ongoing

Improvements and an expansion of the existing Market Plaza is shown in the concept plan as part of the new train station. Public spaces allow a diversity of temporary uses to happen (festivals to farmers’ markets) and gives opportunity for people of all types to come together. The development of the train station has been delayed and alternative designs are being considered, of which there is very little space to include public space.

Figure 16: Concept TOD Plan for Depot Town



The concept plan was developed to meet community values when daily train service starts. The plan features a plaza, shown in red, which could be used for a farmers' market and other events. The Freight House is preserved. The portions of River and Cross Streets in pink is shown as a curb-less "festival" street - making crossings easier for pedestrians on a daily basis while helping the accessibility of the events in Depot Town. A small park space is proposed between River Street and the tracks. Parking is away from the street to the west of the railroad tracks. The design of access to Frog Island park will need to be coordinated with previous designs in the final plans. Drawing by: AECOM

Locate permanent year-round home for Depot Town Farmer’s Market - Completed

The market is currently located in Market Plaza of the Freight House in Depot Town. As plans are developed for the train depot, a permanent year-round location for the farmer’s market should be included in the design. The concept plan shows preservation of the Freight House and the creation of a plaza where the market could be held during the summer months.

CROSS STREET

Cross Street is the interface between the campus of Eastern Michigan University and the City. It serves as a commercial center for both Eastern Michigan students and the adjacent neighborhoods. The plan improves the function of the roads for all while integrating Cross Street with EMU. All of these projects should be pursued in conjunction with EMU and the DDA.

Separate Cross Street and Washtenaw Avenue - Ongoing As shown in the concept plan in Figure 17, Cross Street and Washtenaw Avenue can be separated and made two-way streets. The separation would improve the safety of this high-crash intersection by calming traffic, creating safer pedestrian crossings and better navigation for all modes of transportation. *This infrastructure improvement has*

been included in the Capital Improvements Plan. As stated earlier, this will be part of a phased approach where the actual separation would be last and final phase.

Create a “front door” for EMU by reconfiguration of Cross Street and Washtenaw – Ongoing

During the Design Charrette, EMU officials agreed that the campus needs an entrance and the land created by the pulling apart of the two roads could create a mixed use area with a gathering area and possibly housing. *This project requires coordination with MDOT for implementation. This is related to the aforementioned Separate Cross Street and Washtenaw Avenue plan.*

The centers host a variety of events and land uses in distinctly urban places. The DDA should use its ability to attract and assist businesses to maintain a vibrant business mix, while the City should use its policies to maintain the building form. The “Centers Implementation Matrix” shows the time frame for each action detailed in this chapter and how it meets the City’s primary guiding values of safety, diversity, and sustainability. This matrix is intended to be used by decision-makers to create reports and work plans as well as evaluate progress on an annual basis.

Figure 17: Reconfiguration of Cross & Washtenaw

The concept plan below is a scheme to separate Washtenaw Avenue and Cross Street. The proposal is to pull the two roads apart, eliminating the existing convergence and creating public and developable space, shown in green. The existing statues and the water tower will be linked with a public space that will also give refuge to pedestrians crossing the streets. A developable area will be created to the east of the water tower. Student housing and parking were discussed as possible uses with EMU. Drawing by: AECOM



Figure 18: Centers Implementation Matrix

Action	Timeframe	Location	Safety	Diversity	Equity	Environmental Sustainability	Economy
Continue and expand the number, type, and location of festivals and events	Ongoing	All centers		x			x
Continue efforts to fill upper stories	Ongoing	All centers		x	x	x	x
Maintain and expand transportation options	Ongoing	Downtown	x		x	x	x
Draft a business attraction plan for Downtown, Depot Town and Cross Street	1-5 years	All centers		x			x
Encourage business and event activity during the day and evening	1-5 years	All centers	x	x	x		x
Marketing campaign for the City of Ypsilanti	1-5 years	All centers					x
Curbless "festival" street on Washington	1-5 years	Downtown	x		x		x
Use vacant storefronts for temporary retail uses	1-5 years	Downtown	x		x		x
Permanent year-round home for Downtown Farmer's Market	1-5 years	Downtown	x	x	x	x	x
Permanent year-round home for Depot Town Farmer's Market	1-5 years	Depot Town	x	x	x	x	x
Increase walkability (2-way streets & raised intersections)	1-10 years	Downtown	x		x		x
Curbless "festival" street on River and Cross	1-10 years	Depot Town	x		x		x
Create a public space at new train station	1-10 years	Depot Town	x		x		x
Separate Cross and Washtenaw	1-10 years	Cross Street	x			x	x
Create a "front door" for EMU with reconfiguration of Cross and Washtenaw	1-10 years	Cross Street	x	x			x

Chapter 7 – Neighborhoods

“Charming neighborhoods” – Sticky note on what to preserve, submitted during the Discover Charrette

Ypsilanti has a wide variety of neighborhoods, some built over a century ago and others just decades old. The residents, streets, and architecture create distinct communities with the 4.3 square miles of Ypsilanti. However, when looking at public comment and data on the age, size, and types of housing, the neighborhoods fell into two framework categories: Central Neighborhoods and Outlying Neighborhoods, as shown on Map 14.

PAST POLICIES

The City of Ypsilanti’s housing policy efforts have been in response to the following themes:

- The sizable population of college students and lower income families, along with large supply of multi-family housing, has meant that nearly 2/3 of households rent their homes.
- The large share of pre-war and mid-century structures with energy-efficiency difficulty creates challenges while also drawing residents to historic neighborhoods.
- The “landlocked” and nearly built-out city has lacked the vacant land to participate in the construction of new housing seen in surrounding municipalities.

In 1978, the City created a Historic District and in 1983 began rental housing inspections. These two programs are generally considered to have been successful in stabilizing and maintaining the city’s housing stock and neighborhoods. In 2003, the City enacted a dangerous buildings ordinance that provided an additional tool for addressing the worst nuisance properties and stabilizing surrounding neighborhoods.

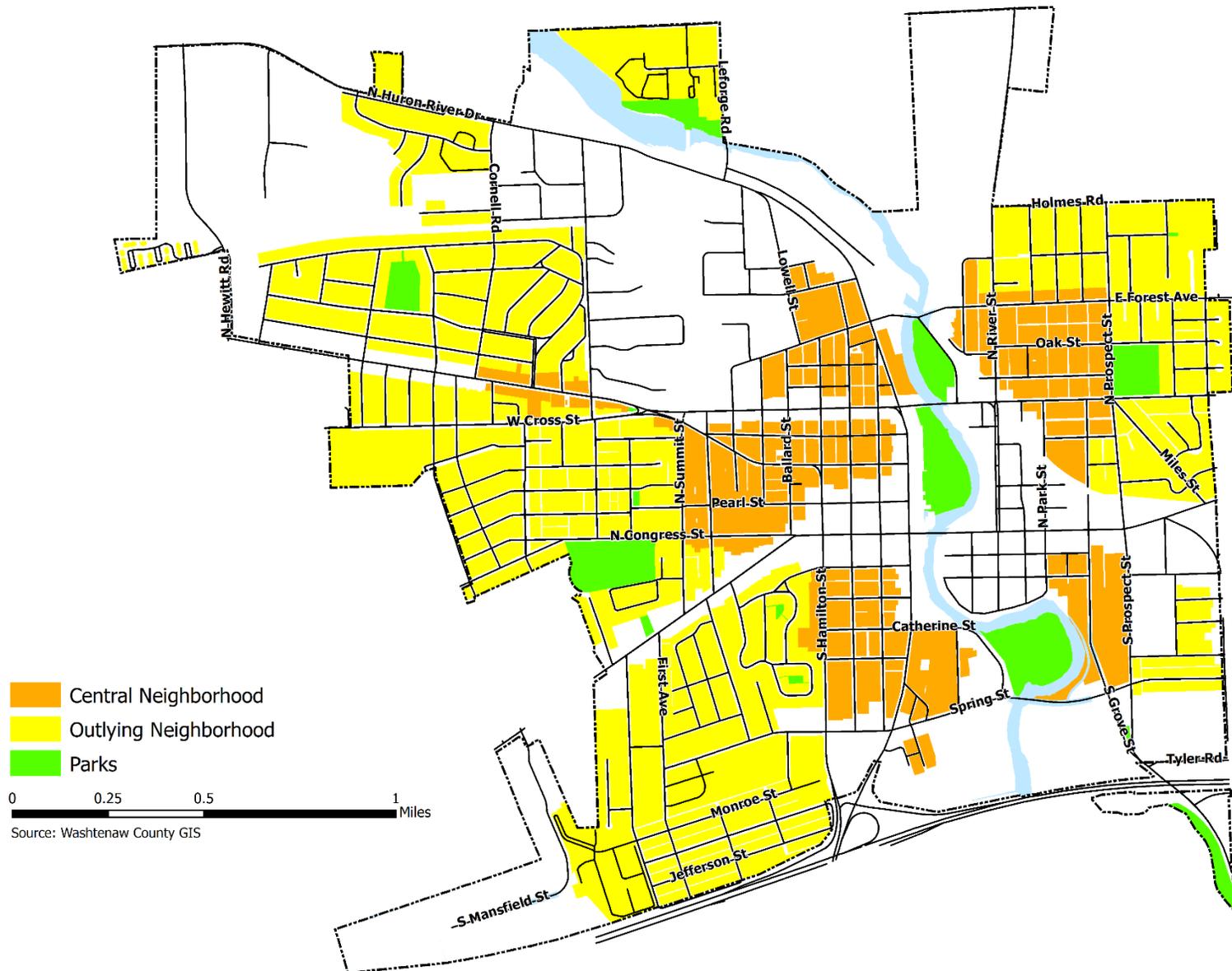
The City began implementation in 2009, when foreclosure activity led to fears of increasing numbers of abandoned buildings, but at that time quickly proved effective in spurring removal or rehabilitation of long-vacant buildings.

The City has also “down zoned” residential areas in an effort to encourage home ownership, most successfully in the Historic Eastside. The most recent occurrence

was in 2006 when around 800 residential parcels in the Cross Street neighborhood were rezoned to reduce maximum permitted density, as laid out in the 2001 Cross Street Neighborhood Improvement Plan. This effort had mixed success since the fall of the housing market in the mid-2000s resulted in lower prices for housing and the high conversion costs to single-family or a smaller number of units were not financially viable in that market.

The previous zoning ordinance defined a range of different multiple-family living uses – rooming house, fraternity, etc. – each with different regulations drafted for those uses at the time of their inclusion in the zoning. The result was confusing regulations that were not flexible for innovations. The updated zoning ordinance and definitions provide better clarity.

Map 14: Neighborhoods City Framework Map



PUBLIC INPUT

In every focus group at the beginning of the 2013 Master Plan process, participants felt the City of Ypsilanti should have housing for people of all ages, races, incomes and abilities in the City as a guiding value. Residents across the City expressed pride in their neighborhoods.

Tension about the location of rental housing – whether townhouses, multiple-family dwellings or large houses converted multiple dwelling units emerged during the charrettes and implementation focus groups. Many participants expressed concerns about rental housing, particularly EMU student housing, expanding into neighborhoods and degrading its value. Others saw the need for student housing in a college town. As EMUs enrollment declines or shifts towards online classes, there could be opportunity to convert unused dorm rooms into units open to residents besides students. Meanwhile, some residents expressed the need for housing with little maintenance, such as a condominium or a rental, but suitable for seniors or young professionals. Ypsilanti lacks this type of housing, often considered as the “missing middle.”

In 2019, residents expressed a desire for “complete neighborhoods” in the community-wide survey. In fact, 68% said that the completeness of the neighborhood was the deciding factor in where they choose to live. The definition of completeness was up to them to decide through the multiple choice question; their results show that in addition to residential uses, residents want their neighborhoods to have recreation space, sidewalks, public transit options, community gardens/trees, and daily need good and services.

DATA

As shown in Chapter 3, the neighborhoods have distinct patterns in terms of age, size, number of units and homeownership/rental status. Closer to the Historic Downtown and EMU’s southern border are clustered large houses built before World War II with a variety of numbers of dwelling units and a mix of owner-occupied units and rentals. Neighborhoods nearer to the borders of the City were built in the later part of the twentieth century and are either single-family houses or multiple-family buildings. With the exception of the Heritage Park area, the majority of the single-family houses are owner-occupied. Multiple-family is almost exclusively rental, except for condominiums built near EMU’s western

Shape Ypsilanti Master Plan (DRAFT UPDATE) – July 15, 2020

border and along Washtenaw near EMU and the Historic Downtown. However, overall, most single-family dwellings are owner-occupied.

In the central neighborhoods, the Historic Eastside has a higher percentage of homeownership and a unique lot mix with many deep lots. Due to the down-zoning decades ago, this neighborhood has a higher rate of homeownership than other neighborhoods built around the same time. The Historic South Side neighborhoods have a range of building types - with some apartment buildings but mostly four units or less - and standard sized lots. The Midtown and Riverside neighborhoods have the widest variety of building types - from cottages to large apartment houses along with other group living arrangements, as well as a large range of lot sizes.

Despite the distinct differences, over two-thirds of the housing units in Ypsilanti are rented. Other college towns have a similar housing mix, including Ann Arbor where 55% of the housing units are rented. Renters are integral members of the community; planning for renters and access to affordable housing shall be continued.

POLICY AND PLANS FOR ALL NEIGHBORHOODS

The following actions apply to all neighborhoods:

Continue and increase rental inspections and enforcement- *Ongoing*

Rental inspection and enforcement of code violations are vital to maintaining safe rental housing. City budget dedicated to rental inspection and enforcement should be maintained, if not increased.

Streamline multiple-family living arrangements into categories based on number of units and form - *Completed*

Living arrangements for multiple-family situations should be collapsed in the form-based code into building forms – duplexes, estate houses, townhouses, and apartment buildings – with categories of number of units matching those in the State Building Code – 2-units, 2-4 units and 5 or more units. Group living arrangements, such as rooming houses and fraternities, will continue to be allowed in estate houses but with regulations for that general use, not tailored for each

instance. [The City updated its zoning ordinance to reflect these living arrangements.](#)

Assist continuation and expansion of EMU Live Ypsi program - *Ongoing*
Eastern Michigan University, with staff assistance from the City and Washtenaw County, offers a forgivable loan program for faculty and staff purchasing a home in the City of Ypsilanti. The City will continue its support of this program.

Plan and zone for range of housing typologies for the needs of all ages and abilities- *Ongoing*

Due to demographic shifts, several neighborhoods have increasing numbers of senior citizens, who may or may not choose to stay in their homes. Similarly, young professionals and families are looking for homes integrated into the community. Neighborhoods should be planned to provide a diversity of housing types within neighborhoods for all stages of life. [The City has used its ordinance to expand housing types permitted in residential zones, but it may be appropriate to further expand housing types, such as accessory dwelling units.](#)

Create “Eco-Districts” in neighborhood parks - *Ongoing*

Residents suggested that demonstration projects of community gardens with hoop houses, rain collection systems, and renewable energy projects be clustered in eco-districts in neighborhood parks, in the Historic Downtown, and other areas.

Temporary events were also suggested in these areas. An existing example of a demonstration project is the Luna Lake rain garden in Prospect Park. While the City cannot take on development of these districts, partnerships with educational institutions and neighborhood groups may provide resources to establish them.

[The City has permitted these uses within parks and other zones and welcomes opportunities that follow these guidelines:](#)

- The proposal be in the proper location of the park to complement existing activities, both active (sports areas and playgrounds) and passive (walking or sitting areas)
- The proposal should be located in an area with appropriate lighting and visibility to assure safety of users and enough natural surveillance to be kept watch over by neighbors.
- Proposals should be part of an adopt-a-park effort
- Policies will need to be developed to ensure maintenance, both short and long term.

Continue Home-Based Entrepreneurship - *Completed*

The City encourages home-based businesses through clear regulation. The updated zoning allow businesses within homes using the current regulatory scheme for uses.

Regulate the form of buildings to preserve the character of neighborhoods - *Completed*

Using the building types existing within the neighborhoods, the zoning regulations should preserve the architectural patterns. [The zoning ordinance was updated to include Building Types.](#)

Re-survey of the Historic District – *Ongoing*

[The Ypsilanti Historic District designation was completed in 1978 and 1983. The current listing documents are not sufficient for addressing common issues with the historic resources, including identification of contributing and non-contributing resources; areas and periods of significance; and clear boundaries. The district should be resurveyed and a new Historic District Study Committee formed to update the district. A new study committee report would greatly aid property owners, staff, and the commission with making the best decisions for the preservation of Ypsilanti’s most historic resources. Additionally, it would clear up confusion with the outdated boundary map, as some boundary lines currently bisect parcels, and includes part of the Water Street development area, where all of the historic resources have been removed.](#)

Consider new opportunities for accessory dwelling units – *Ongoing*

[The City engaged with residents during a January 2020 meeting. While findings varied, accessory dwelling units appear to be embraced by a number of community residents. It was inferred from this meeting that residents want accessory dwelling units to be permissible uses in a greater number of zoning districts, but with protections to secure harmony with the neighborhood. The following regulations might be considered to keep this harmony: size and height, ratio to principal structure and green space, and parking. Future community meetings may guide further action. The City shall first explore these opportunities in Central Neighborhood-based zoning districts and may consider expanding to Outlying Neighborhoods if the appropriate regulations are put in place.](#)

CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOODS

These neighborhoods are some of the oldest in Ypsilanti. Initially oriented on the Huron River, they are built on a grid street network connected to the adjacent business districts. They border downtown, Depot Town, and EMU. These neighborhoods have a range of residential building types, with churches, schools, stores, and gas stations intermixed. Around the railroad, industrial uses are mixed into the neighborhood.

The following policies and actions aim to preserve the form of these neighborhoods while enabling the sustainability of all the buildings:

Preserve the character of the area by using regulations on street type, building type as well as use - *Completed*

Elements of form-based code were developed based on existing streets, lot sizes, building types, and uses to preserve the context of each area. The goal was to eliminate regulations that need exceptions to preserve existing context by creating rules based on the context. In addition to the zoning updates, engineering standards were updated.

Regulations of the variety of housing types, uses, and lot sizes will be calibrated to the existing patterns – *Completed*

Central neighborhoods do not all look alike so the regulations reflect the differences with appropriate gradations in the variety of uses and building types based on existing patterns. Three core neighborhood zones were created: Core-neighborhood single-family, core-neighborhood mid, and core-neighborhood with the main difference being the varying levels of housing density permitted.

Preserve Bell-Kramer residential land uses – *Ongoing*

The Bell-Kramer neighborhood, located near the southeastern corner of S. Huron St. and Spring St. underwent planning changes from 2013 to 2018. The neighborhood was identified as a District in the City Framework and was zoned mostly PMD due to its proximity to the former landfill to the south. However, City testing for contaminants came back safer than previously understood. The City engaged in meetings with the residents and heard their wishes to keep the neighborhood residential. Consequently, in 2018 the City rezoned the neighborhood back to residential, to CN-Mid. This zoning designation better

stabilizes the residential land uses of the neighborhood. In hope to better protect the health of the residents, the City also updated a well-restriction ordinance which prohibits the drilling and use of wells in the neighborhood. It is recommended the Bell-Kramer neighborhood keep its residential character. The City Framework was updated to reflect this change from *District* to *Central Neighborhood*.

OUTLYING NEIGHBORHOODS

These neighborhoods, constructed during or after World War II, are almost exclusively residential uses, with single-family and multiple-family uses separated. Single-family residences are usually smaller than those in the central neighborhoods. The zoning changes below are designed to stabilize these neighborhoods:

Limit uses to predominantly single-family residential uses in areas with small houses, suited for only single-family-*Completed*

Several neighborhoods - Heritage Park, Worden Garden, Prospect Gardens, Miles neighborhoods and the houses on River Street from Holmes to the north to Cherry – were formerly zoned for two-family residential use. Because very few structures are two-family nor have the floor area to accommodate two dwelling units, these neighborhoods were limited to single-family uses when the zoning ordinance was updated. These neighborhoods may have potential for accessory dwelling units, based on where there is existing infrastructure. Future community meetings may guide proper action.

The matrix in figure 19 shows the time frame for each item and if it meets the goals of safety, diversity, and sustainability. It, in conjunction with the other matrices, should be used by decision-makers to create reports and work plans as well as evaluate progress on an annual basis.

Figure 19: Neighborhoods Implementation Matrix

Action	Timeframe	Location	Safety	Diversity	Equity	Environmental Sustainability	Economy
Continue and increase rental inspections and enforcement	Ongoing	All neighborhoods	x		x	x	x
Assist continuation and expansion of EMU Live Ypsi program	Ongoing	All neighborhoods		x			x
Regulate the form of buildings to preserve the character of neighborhoods	Ongoing	All neighborhoods		x	x		x
Create "Eco-Districts" in neighborhood parks	1-10 years	All neighborhoods		x		x	
Re-survey of the Historic District	1-10 years	All neighborhoods			x	x	
Consider new opportunities for accessory dwelling units	1-10 years	All neighborhoods		x	x	x	x
Preserve Bell-Kramer residential land uses	Ongoing	Central neighborhoods	x		x	x	

Chapter 8 - Corridors

“They should connect cities, not be primary destinations.”- Comment on main roads, like Washtenaw, submitted on the website, shapeypsi.com

There are two types of corridors located in Ypsilanti. One is a general corridor which contains a variety of medium to smaller parcels and is adjacent to both types of neighborhoods, such as College Heights and Midtown. General corridors are home to predominantly commercial establishments, restaurants, offices, and other businesses that are geared toward automobile traffic. The land pattern is typically linear and provides predominately commercial and office uses that are adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Usually a physical barrier is created to “protect” one use from another by way of a wall or heavy landscaping.

The second type is a historic corridor, which differs slightly from the general corridor in scale and building type. The historic corridors are characterized by smaller commercial establishments and offices mixed with large historic structures (such as historic homes that are now being used for a variety of purposes). Historic corridors generally have a more seamless integration with the surrounding neighborhoods.

PAST POLICIES

The current zoning ordinance regulates the use of the land primarily, linking a certain number of related land uses to individual parcels of land. In corridors, these zoning districts have laid out in strips, usually commercial but also office, civic, and multiple- and single -family. The resulting zoning maps are a patchwork of districts down the corridors. However, the uses cannot freely flow down the corridors due to the use classifications. Rezoning is often required.

In general corridors, the landscaping regulations required by the zoning districts and overlays are suburban in nature. The entry-way overlay on all general corridors at the borders of the City requires a 10-foot greenbelt around the entire parcel. Since these lots are generally smaller than suburban counterparts, the required setbacks and landscaping either do not fit on the parcels when redeveloped or limit the building size to a footprint only compatible with uses needing a small square footage. The result has been vacant or underutilized buildings along the general corridors or approvals that waive requirements. The current zoning does not encourage improvements due the complexity of applying the standards.

The regulations of the Historic District have maintained the integrity of the buildings along the historic corridors. The high speeds of the one-way streets on the historic corridors of Cross, Huron and Hamilton, however, make the street itself a hostile environment, lessening the value of some the buildings.

PUBLIC INPUT

During the charrettes, participants often spoke about the difficulties of walking or cycling in the corridors of the City. They also expressed disappointment about the number of vacant or underutilized stores.

POLICY AND PLANS FOR ALL CORRIDORS

The following items apply to all types of corridors:

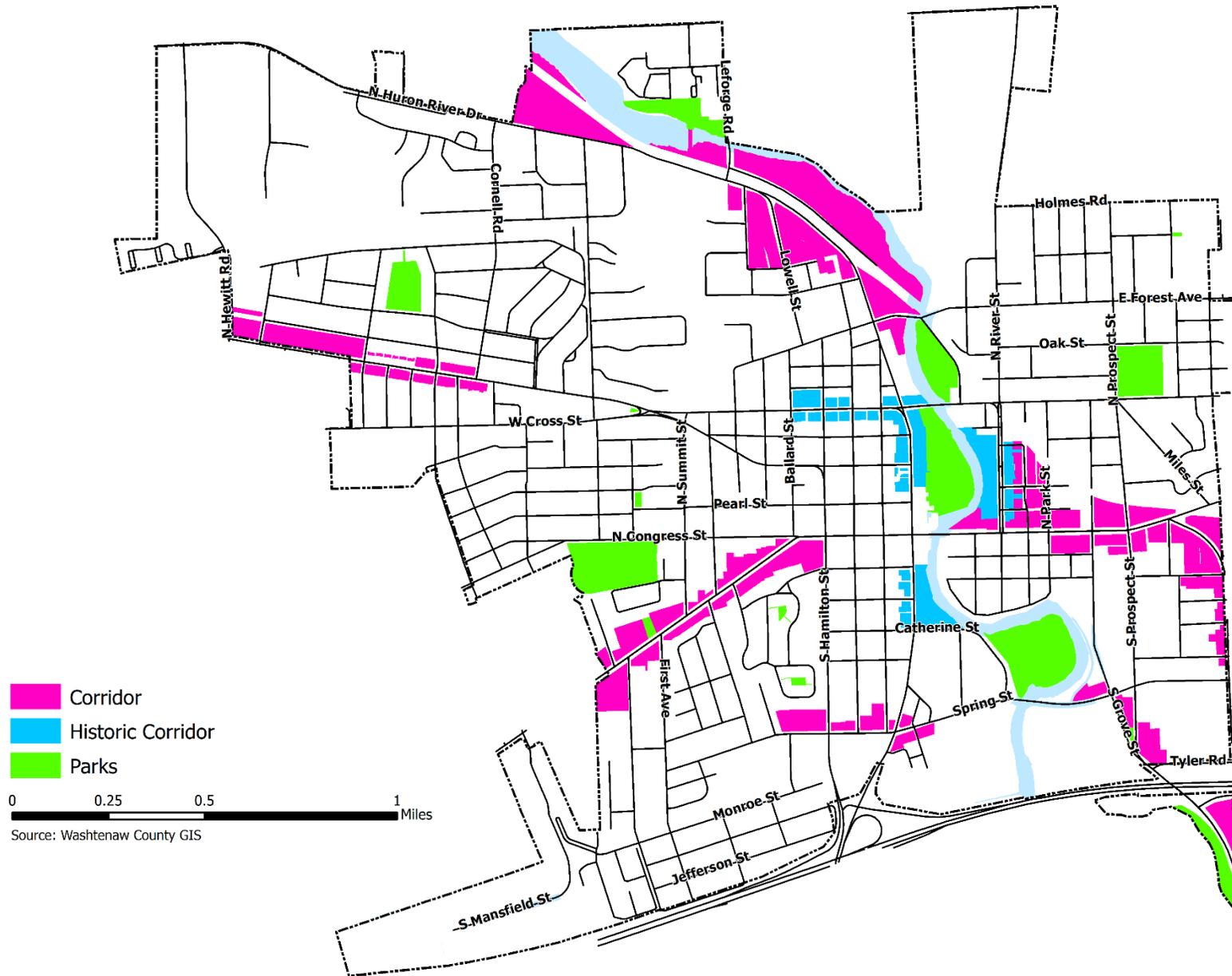
Designate the appropriate building form for each corridor- *Completed*

The form-based code will designate types of buildings to match the existing patterns within the corridor and, if applicable, the change envisioned by the community for that area. [The zoning ordinance was updated to include building types in “Walkable Urban Districts.”](#)

Retain the mix of existing uses within each corridor but allow them throughout the corridor - *Completed*

The form-based code would allow all the current uses within a corridor area to remain, but also to be anywhere throughout that area. For instance, a vacant lot now zoned commercial instead would be zoned general or historic corridor and all of uses, such as multiple-family, commercial or office within that segment of the street happen without a rezoning.

Map 15: Corridors City Framework Map



HISTORIC CORRIDORS

Historic corridors are located along Cross Street, Huron Street, Hamilton Street, and River Street. The following actions will help to preserve and enhance the vitality of these areas:

Reinforce preservation of historic buildings- *Completed*

The form-based code will require the elements of the historic buildings along these corridors be incorporated into any new development or rebuilding.

Restore two-way function to Historic Corridors- *Ongoing*

As outlined in the transportation chapter of this plan, two-way function of these streets will increase safety and make navigation by foot, bicycle, bus or car easier.

Maintain River Street as a historic boulevard - *Ongoing*

River Street between Cross Street and Michigan Avenue is a boulevard lined by historic buildings with a variety of uses. The form-based code should attune design standards for this corridor to the street form of a boulevard.

GENERAL CORRIDORS

General corridors are designated along Washtenaw Ave and Cross Streets, East Michigan Avenue and Ecorse, Huron River Drive, Leforge and Railroad Street, Harriet Street, Lincoln and West Michigan Avenue.

Coordinate Washtenaw Avenue with the Re-Imagine Washtenaw Plan

Ongoing

The City has been an important partner in the Reimagine Washtenaw coalition. While larger redevelopment sites are available in areas outside the City, many of the place-making, transit-oriented, and mixed-use development concepts can be employed on the smaller City lots. Diverse land uses are contemplated for the corridor, but additional land designated for commercial land uses is not envisioned. Rather, as sites are redeveloped, particularly in retail nodes at Hewitt, Mansfield/Cornell, and Cross Street, special emphasis should be placed on incorporating walkable and mixed-use elements in the site redesign.

The form-based code in the node areas will look to have redevelopment move closer to the street, provide improved pedestrian access and generally orient more to the pedestrian than to the vehicle.

Require a pedestrian-friendly building form while allowing a mix of uses for both students and residents along Huron River Drive, Leforge & Railroad corridors – *Ongoing*

These corridors are borders with the EMU campus that currently divide it from it the City due to the width of the roads and barriers of the Huron River and railroad tracks. In the form-based code, the regulations should be changed to create a walkable environment with appropriate uses that integrates the City and the EMU campus. A design process for this area should be part of the 5-year update to this plan.

Restore Harriet Street as the Main Street of adjacent neighborhoods – *Ongoing*

The same mixture of uses would be allowed along Harriet, from Hamilton to Perry, but the urban form on the north side of the road would be required for any redevelopment of the south side. In order to create a walkable environment, the number of lanes for vehicles would be decreased to two lanes, creating room for on-street parking, bicycle lanes and pedestrian areas. The reconfiguration of the road would most likely on be possible when Huron and Hamilton are converted to two-way.

The matrix details the phasing of the plans and policies discussed above and how they meet the City's goals of safety, diversity and sustainability. With other matrices, it should be used to create reports and work plans as well as evaluate progress on an annual basis.

Figure 20: Corridors Implementation Matrix

Action	Timeframe	Location	Safety	Diversity	Equity	Environmental Sustainability	Economy
Designate the appropriate building form for each corridor based on existing patterns and vision for that corridor	Form-based code	All corridors	x	x	x		x
Retain the mix of uses within each corridor but allow them throughout the area	Form-based code	All corridors		x	x		x
Reinforce preservation of historic buildings	Form-based code	Historic corridors		x			x
Maintain River Street as a historic boulevard	Form-based code	Historic corridors	x	x			x
Require a pedestrian friendly building form while allowing a mix of uses for both students and residents along Huron River Drive, Leforge & Railroad corridors	Form-based code	General corridors	x	x	x		x
Coordinate regulations for Washtenaw Avenue with the Washtenaw County Re-Imagine Washtenaw Plan	1-10 years	General corridors	x	x	x		x
Restore Harriet Street as the Main Street of adjacent neighborhoods	1-10 years	General corridors	x	x	x		x
Restore two-way function to Cross, Huron, and Hamilton Streets	1-10 years	Historic corridors	x		x	x	x

Chapter 9 – Districts

“Stable, diverse local economy”- Sticky note on what to create, from the Discover Charrette

Districts accommodate major economic development, employment centers or universities or unique entities, like the cemetery. The range of districts within Ypsilanti includes Eastern Michigan University, the social service and medical offices clustered on Towner and several industrial areas which provide employment and stability to the community.

PAST POLICIES

The City has established partnerships with the anchors of each of these districts. The City, DDA and EMU work together through the Community Engaged Council. The City is open to regularly meeting with the owners of the industrial properties in the southern part of the City. Zoning policies have been consistent for these areas and are less to blame for any vacancy than the recent economic downturn, a legacy of environmental contamination, and the shift away from a manufacturing economy.

PUBLIC INPUT

Participants views of the districts varied for each area. Very little was said about Highland Cemetery during the process. Much was said about Eastern Michigan University and the need for better town-gown relationships. A true symbiotic relationship between the City and the University was seen as key. The office, social service, and medical buildings on Towner in the eastern part of the City were not mentioned during the process, even by heads of social service agencies in focus groups.

Almost all participants felt new jobs within the City for current City residents of all education levels were imperative. They felt large job centers should be located in southern industrial areas or “jobs districts”. Overall, the vision articulated was that jobs and industry are needed for the economic and equitable sustainability of the City.

DATA

Since the last Master Plan in 1998, the City of Ypsilanti has experienced a fundamental shift in its local economy. The manufacturing base that once sustained the City is almost entirely gone. It has lost close to 1,600 manufacturing jobs since 2001. The largest tax payers are now apartment property owners, instead of manufacturing facilities.

Eastern Michigan University remains an economic driver in the City, as one of the largest employers.

The industrial park in the southwest corner of the City has been mostly built out. Meanwhile larger facilities, like the Angstrom property, have been difficult to re-commission.

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Due to state law, the City has no jurisdiction over the built environment within EMU’s campus. However, a guiding value for the City is Ypsilanti is an asset for EMU and vice versa. The City can continue to work with the University to create integrated functions between the City and Eastern, as well as programmatic steps:

Update regulations to create walkable areas at the border of the City and Campus - Completed

The form-based code should require walkable streets with building forms that complement the campus of EMU at the borders of campus. Further details on proposals for Leforge, Railroad and Huron River Drive are in the chapter on corridors.

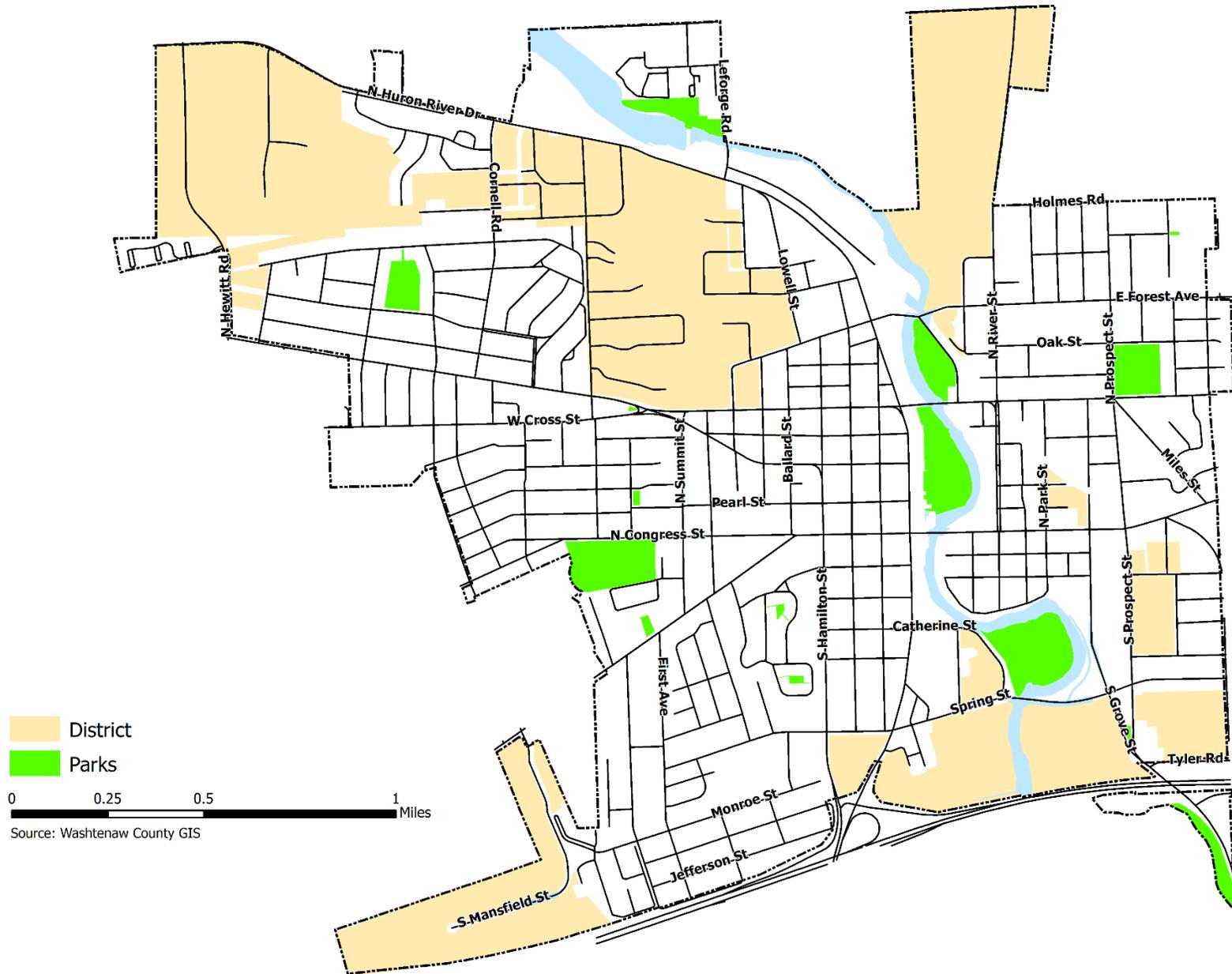
Create a “front door” for EMU with the reconfiguration of Cross Street and Washtenaw - Ongoing

As discussed in the chapter on Centers, the confluence of Cross Street and Washtenaw should be eliminated by pulling the two roads apart, creating a mixed use area with a gathering area and possibly housing. The pedestrian mix and form should create a coordinated street scape between campus and city borders, both here and in the Huron River Drive corridor discussed in Chapter 8.

Create “Welcome to Ypsilanti” packages for new EMU students, including a web version - Not started

The City should bring together EMU administration and the Visitors and Convention Bureau to create welcome packages for all new students.

Map 16: Districts City Framework Map



HUMAN AND HEALTH SERVICES DISTRICT

The area on either side of Towner between Prospect and Arnet Streets is home to the Washtenaw County Service Center to the north and medical facilities to the south. Both provide services for the City and the County. The facilities' layouts are suburban in form. The following policies or actions should be taken in this district:

Create regulations that support the existing building form but assure access by all modes of transportation - Completed

The service center and medical facilities are suburban style buildings but are accessed by car, transit, bicycle and pedestrians. The form-based code should support the current style of building but require pathways, parking and loading facilities for all types of transportation.

Encourage use or redevelopment of unused parking lots - Completed

The parking lot for the medical facility is often empty. The city should work with the owners of the facility to see if a temporary use is possible to bring more activity. If redevelopment occurs, the existing street grid should be reconnected and a more urban form required. [Health and Human Services zoning district was updated under the Walkable Urban District umbrella, with hope that future development will then be building-type based with less of a suburban style.](#)

JOB DISTRICTS IN SOUTHERN PART OF CITY

The industrial park, large Angstrom property and other assorted industrial properties in the southern part of the City are well-suited for facilities that require easy highway access and roadways for trucks. These districts should be called "job districts" where the following plans or policies should occur:

Allow renewable energy facilities, such as solar panels - Completed

Most participants in the implementation focus groups felt that renewable energy facilities should be allowed as part of development in Job Districts, but not displace the possibility of new facilities being built. During the process of rewriting the zoning ordinance, the City could explore whether large-scale renewable energy facilities could be allowed as the primary use as long as they would be incorporated into later development. These types of facilities would be in line with the City's guiding values of Ypsilanti being sustainable and a great place to do business, especially the green and creative.

Reduce minimum lot size and width in the industrial park - Completed

The industrial park was laid out in a suburban style with large lots. The two smallest lots along Mansfield are approximately 125 feet wide. If that were to be made the new minimum lot width, approximately 10 new, developable industrial

lots could be created by splitting off undeveloped land from existing parcels, subtracting area along streams and wetlands. The minimum lot area could be established at 60,000 square foot, which is the approximate area of the smallest existing parcel. Property owners would decide whether to split and sell land. The potential addition of a non-motorized path connecting the residential areas to the east of the industrial park should be considered as part of future development and/or the 5-year plan update. Additional jobs and industry is vital to the City's fiscal sustainability.

Encourage development of vacant parking areas - Ongoing

The City should work with the owners of the Angstrom property to bring development to the large parking lot associated with their facility that is no longer needed. A concept plan for the site is in the following chapter. Again, jobs and industry are needed for the economic and equitable sustainability of the City. [Because of its location in the floodway, physical development may be challenging. Using the site to conduct flooding analysis may be an efficient temporary use here.](#)

RAILROAD AREA SOUTHEAST OF DEPOT TOWN

The area along the railroad, to the southeast of Depot Town, has long-standing businesses in the community. However, these uses are often at odds with the adjoining residential uses. The areas shown as district should be allowed to transition from neighborhoods to job areas, when owners petition for approvals. The corridor area to the west on Lincoln will have a mixture of less intensive uses in an urban form to act as transition between this area and the historic neighborhoods and centers nearby.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

In this effort, the City has identified the following emerging sectors as industries aligned with its Guiding Values and the needs of its residents: small manufacturing and craft production, creative economy, renewable energy, and food. Economic incentives, such as tax abatements, should be used to continue the growth of these sectors.

HIGHLAND CEMETERY

A historic part of Ypsilanti, the cemetery should be preserved and current policies left in place. [The City and Historic District Commission supported an effort to list the cemetery in the National Register of Historic Places. The Commission approved the nomination in 2019 and the cemetery was officially designated in 2020. The City continues to support preservation of the historic cemetery, working with the nonprofit organization who owns and operates it.](#)

The matrix at the end of this chapter shows how each of the proposals above enhances safety, diversity and sustainability in the City, as well as phasing. This matrix, those at the end of the previous chapters and the implementation matrix in the appendix are intended to be used by decision-makers to create reports and work plans as well as evaluate progress on an annual basis

Action	Timeframe	Location	Safety	Diversity	Equity	Environmental Sustainability	Economy
Update regulations to create walkable areas at the border of the City and Campus	Form-based code	EMU	x	x	x		x
Create regulations that support the existing building form but assure access by all modes of transportation	Form-based code	Health & Human Services	x	x	x	x	
Allow renewable energy facilities, such as solar panels, on industrial land	Form-based code	Job Districts				x	x
Reduce minimum lot size and width in the industrial park to create more opportunity	Form-based code	Job Districts		x			x
Align economic development incentives and programs to encourage emerging sectors that align with the Guiding Values and the employment potential of residents	1-5 years	All Districts					
Create "Welcome to Ypsilanti" packages for new EMU students, including web version	1-5 years	EMU		x	x		x
Encourage use or redevelopment of unused parking lots	1-5 years	Health & Human Services & Job Districts		x		x	x
Create a "front door" for EMU in the area created by the reconfiguration of Cross Street and Washtenaw Ave.	1-10 years	EMU	x	x		x	x

Chapter 10 – Redevelopment Areas

“Space not being utilized” - Sticky note on what to change, submitted during the Discover Charrette

Ypsilanti has three former industrial sites which could be redeveloped in the next 20 years. Each area is discussed in detail below and design concepts for the three sites are shown in this chapter. These drawings are concepts only, which mean they will not be duplicated detail by detail exactly as presented. All of the sites hold the promise of additional tax revenue, jobs and residents, as well as the challenges of environmental contamination and competing in a depressed regional market.

WATER STREET

Beginning around 1980, the City looked to this area of former and underutilized industrial land as a target for redevelopment. At that time, the City had little to no vacant developable land. Between 1998 and 2001, the 38-acre area was targeted for redevelopment as an urban neighborhood with a variety of housing types, particularly for sale condominiums, increasing both the new-construction housing options available and the number of owner-occupied households in the City. While the City acquired the land and completed most of the demolition and brownfield remediation necessary over the years, the intended development failed to occur. The land – and its accompanying \$31 million debt – remains a major fiscal challenge.

Two developers had options on the land and were intending to purchase the entire site and develop it. For different financial reasons, both developers pulled out of agreements. In 2008, the City decided that looking for a master developer, one entity that would take on the entire site, was no longer feasible due to the national economic downturn. Rather, it would sell smaller pieces of the parcel to interested parties as they came forward.

Three different proposals have been put to the City Council since that time. One, for a drive-through restaurant, was rejected. Another, for a County Recreation Center, was tentatively accepted through a Letter of Intent. The third, for a discount retailer, was accepted after several rounds of negotiations.

Although each had a different result, each proposal was closely followed in the press and generated much public comment. During the charrettes for this Master

Plan, many people expressed a range of visions for the property – from a permaculture forest to mixed-use mid-rise development. Almost everyone also expressed the urgency to use the property soon.

Given this political climate, the City Council will face a challenge with any development proposal that comes before them for Water Street. The Water Street redevelopment concept plan shown on the opposite page was developed based on community input during the charrettes held for this process in the Spring of 2013. The plan shows items consistently requested by the community: a formal community gathering space and a linear park along the riverfront.

The concept plan includes two structures not in previous plans for Water Street. The first is a stormwater facility in the floodplain to service the entire site, in keeping with the community’s values of creating an urban space but using environmental systems. As portions of the site are sold, the storm water facility will need to be built, some portions ahead of the actual development. Second, a vehicular bridge extending River Street across the Huron River and south to Factory Street is shown. The extension of River Street would complete a missing portion of the street grid, giving the neighborhoods near Spring and Factory Street easier access to the resources in the downtown and would create an easy traffic route from the highway to Water Street. The bridge and street extension are long term projects, perhaps ten to twenty years in future.

Figure 22: Water Street Concept Plan



The drawing to the left is based on community input during the charrettes and urban design principles. It is a 20-year vision for the Water Street area. When developed, the site may differ from this exact layout.

The street layout is a continuation of the existing street system, drawing the value of the river through the community. A vehicular bridge is proposed extending River Street to Factory. A stormwater facility for the entire site is shown just north of the river.

The plan includes a formal park, ringed in red, and a linear park along the Huron. The property south of the river is shown as recreation use. This area is mostly floodplain. The building shown south of the river is a concept footprint that would need further study. Drawing by: AECOM

Approval Process and Standards

The concept plan is based upon common urban design standards which will be incorporated into the form-based code for the City. These are the standards by which the City Council should determine whether the City should sell a portion of Water Street for a proposed development. The standards do not talk about the use. Rather, they dictate the design of the street, what is on the street and the design of the buildings for multiple uses over the long-term. If and only if all of these standards are met, should the City Council consider sale of property on Water Street:

Respect right-of-ways & blocks

The street layout should connect to existing streets – River, Lincoln and Park across Michigan Avenue to the north, as well as Parsons and South to the east. The new streets should continue the same width and design. Also, the blocks, as laid out in the sketch, pull the value of the view of Huron River through the entire site to the rest of city, by ending streets into parkland along the river’s edge. All proposed development should abide by this general layout.

Block perimeter should be less than 1,200 feet, like the other blocks in the City

Every block in Water Street, the area of land bounded on four sides by streets, should be less than 1,200 feet in perimeter. Blocks larger than this length, the average block perimeter in the adjacent Historic Downtown, will cut off access and value from the site to the rest of the City.

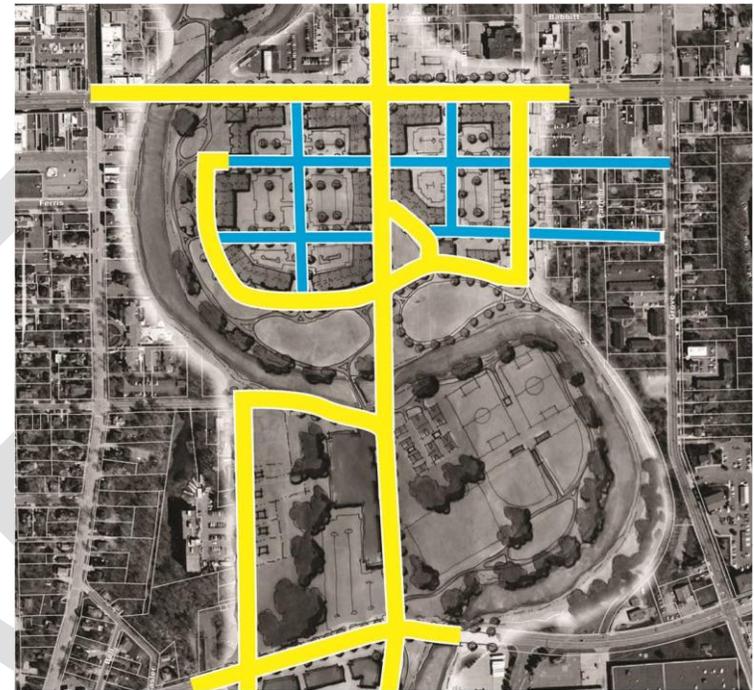
All streets have on-street parking

Parallel parking should be required on all streets and count towards any zoning parking requirements. The on-street parking slows traffic, makes a walkable environment and provides parking in front of buildings.

All streets have sidewalks

To assure a walkable space, all streets must have sidewalks on both sides, including the side of the street nearest to the park fronting the Huron River.

Figure 23: Water Street “A” and “B” Streets



“A” Streets are shown in yellow and “B” streets in blue

All streets have space for trees and other stuff

New streets in the Water Street area should have designated areas for trees between the road edge and the sidewalk, while street furniture – benches, trash receptacles and outdoor seating – should be placed in the same place along the sidewalk. The photograph on the opposite page shows an example zones for trees, outdoor seating and pedestrians in Depot Town.

All driveway aprons have the same design

Driveway aprons, the portion of the curb cut that slopes down to meet the street, should be consistent throughout the development. Moreover, they should be made of different materials than the sidewalk to show where vehicles enter and exit to pedestrians, as shown in the photograph on the opposite page. They should also be gradually sloped for ease of pedestrian crossing.

All buildings are built for multiple uses over time

All building should be built for eventual re-use, specifically through regulation of the height of floor. The ground floor, from floor to ceiling should be a minimum of 12 feet with a maximum of 14 feet. Upper floors should be 10 feet.

New development has “A” & “B” streets, similar to the Historic Downtown (see Figure 23)

Buildings which front “A” streets must have parking on the street and behind the building. “A” street design, with no curb cuts, is required on Michigan Avenue, River Street as it is continued through the site and Park Street as well as the street fronting the park adjacent to the Huron River. The “A” street design must incorporate the elements and dimensions of the cross section on this page (see figure 26).

“B” streets (see figure 27) allow curb cuts and parking lots to front the street. “B” streets are allowed for the continuation of Parson, South and Lincoln Streets as well as other internal streets. “B” streets must contain the dimensions and aspects shown in cross section on this page.

All buildings on “A” streets should be friendly to the street.

Buildings on “A” streets should be friendly to pedestrians by following these urban design rules:

- 90-100% of the building faces the “A” street
- It is built one to five feet from street right of way
- 60% of the front of the first floor is transparent windows or glazing
- The primary building entrance faces “A” street
- The first floor of buildings should have active uses - stores, restaurants, services - where people come and go often.

Figure 24: Sidewalk with Furnishing Zones



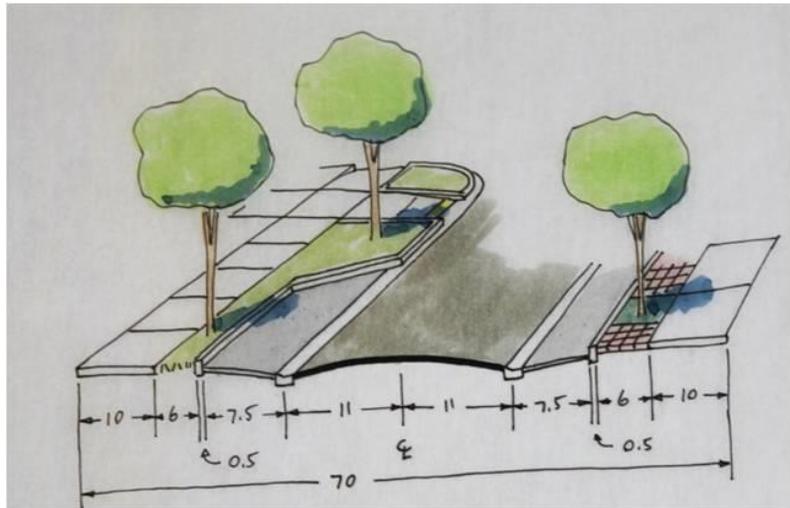
Source: ENP & Associates

Figure 25: Driveway Apron Example



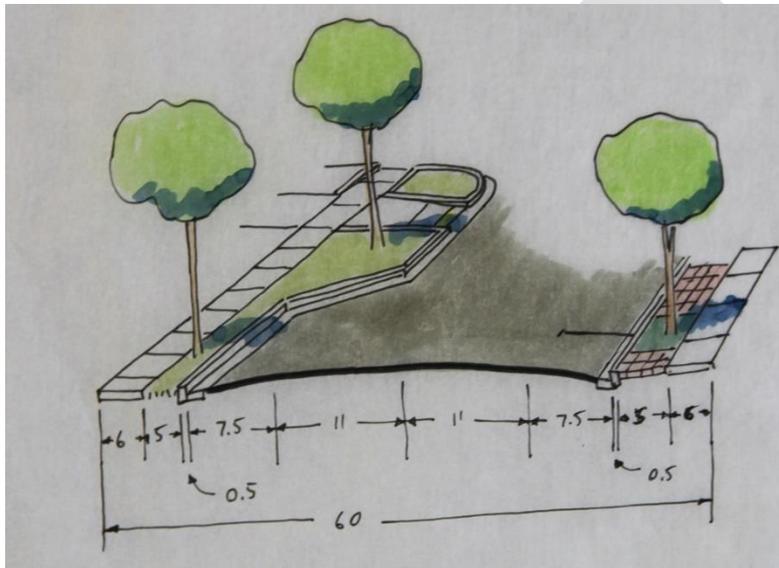
Source: AECOM

Figure 26: Water Street “A” Street Cross Section



Source: AECOM

Figure 27: Water Street “B” Street Cross Section



Source: AECOM

Market Considerations

The vacant property on Water Street offers developers an opportunity to build from the ground up, with little or no environmental remediation. All other development opportunities in the City involve the re-use of existing buildings, which require specialized design, or probable demolition and environmental clean-up.

Because of these advantages, the Water Street development site offers opportunities for larger stores and national retailers to locate in the City. With the coming recreation center, this site can be attractive for businesses such as a sporting goods store, but also is a marketable site for a hardware store, major grocery store, pharmacy, and neighborhood types of goods and services. A full-service grocery store has been requested by residents for many years and was throughout the Master Plan process.

Housing has always been part of the vision for the redevelopment of Water Street and the site offers a central location near goods and services. Upper story housing in nearby Depot Town and the Historic Downtown have waiting lists and were easily leased, even in tough economic times in the late 2000s. During the charrettes, residents expressed the need for attached or multiple family housing for seniors and for young professionals.

The market will most likely dictate the height of the buildings. The site is more likely to be filled in a shorter amount of time if the buildings are one to two stories. If the buildings are 3-4 stories, complete development of the site will take longer, probably with a first building, a period of 3-5 years with little to no activity and then a flurry of development. In the form-based code, buildings with two or more stories may be required on “A” streets.

If train service comes to Depot Town, the market situation for Water Street will change as the site is within a 10-15 minute walk from the location of the train station. Most cities have seen market pressure for attached or multiple-family housing within walking distance of new transit stations.

No matter what use is most marketable at the time, the buildings should abide by the urban design standards detailed previously. The City will continue to work with real estate professionals to market and develop the site. A consistent and coherent marketing and development process will attract investment interest.

BAY LOGISTICS SITE (FORMER MOTOR WHEEL)

This property, just east of the railroad and Huron River north of Forest, has a long history of industrial activity. Currently, the 30-acre site is a warehousing and distribution facility. Due to the history of the site, any use other than industrial would most likely require environmental remediation. The upcoming form-based code should allow the current form and use to continue.

The City Framework designates this parcel as a district but the concept plan on the following page shows the site designed as a central neighborhood. The site is within a 10-minute walk of the anticipated train station in Depot Town just to the south. As with the Water Street site, demand for attached or multiple-family housing is anticipated within walking distance of daily commuter train service. Also, the site is within walking distance to EMU's campus, attractive to EMU students, faculty and staff. The extent of any environmental contamination is not known and the cost and level of clean-up, the highest of which is residential as required by the State of Michigan, will influence redevelopment costs.

Market analysis for this Master Plan concluded this site may be marketable as a larger scale mixed use development. It could incorporate many of the unmet shopping needs for students and professionals within a new rental housing complex that shares a parking structure with EMU, residents and shoppers. The concept plan for the site, shown in Figure 28, is a rendering of what a larger scale mixed use development could be. The plan is based on the urban design principles outlined for Water Street, continuing the existing street grid through the site. Two multi-use paths are shown, connecting the site to Eastern Michigan University to the west and Depot Town to the south.

When the form-based code is developed, the site will likely be zoned as a district, allowing the use and integrating the form into the surrounding neighborhood if redeveloped. However, redevelopment of the site as a central neighborhood with attached and multiple-family housing units as well as retail or office should be considered if brought forward by an applicant to rezone and redevelop the site.

Figure 28: Bay Logistics Concept Plan

The concept plan to the right shows a possible redevelopment layout for the Bay Logistics site. The plan assumes an increased market for housing, office, and retail, possibly driven by daily rail service in Depot Town. **Environmental remediation costs are unknown and will influence the redevelopment of the site.** The commercial study done for this process suggested this site would be marketable as a mixed-use development with shopping on the first-floor and residential above. The plan shows a new community park in the northeast corner, public green space bordering the cemetery and the Huron River and a new pedestrian bridge crossing the River.

The plan also shows possible redevelopment along Railroad, Forest and Lowell, with a new pedestrian path over the railroad. All redevelopment would be at the initiative of the owners of the property. Drawing by: AECOM



ANGSTROM PROPERTY (FORD/VISTEON)

This property has been home to industrial manufacturing since the early 1900s. For many years, it was the highest property tax payer in the City. The site has two components separated by the Huron River – a large factory on a 35.7-acre parcel and a 25.5-acre parking lot. Environmental contamination has been remediated on sections of the factory side of the site. The parking lot, no longer used, has always been used for parking.

Presently, the property is owned by the Angstrom USA LLC, which is not manufacturing within the factory as originally planned. They owners indicated to the City that they are open to selling the parking lot portion of the site. The site is well-suited as a job site due to the size of the property and easy access to I-94. Through the public engagement process, participants repeatedly expressed the need for jobs in the City.

The concept plan for the site in figure 31 shows a series of additional buildings on the parking lot area laid out in block pattern based on that of the City. Buildings on this site would be built outside of the floodplain of the Huron River and may not be in the exact location shown. In terms of the form-based zoning, the City should treat this area as a district with similar form and allowed uses as the industrial park in the southwest portion of the City. The City or other economic development entities, such as Ann Arbor SPARK, could pursue a certain sector for the site. The Northwest Council of Governments of Michigan has developed a Food Innovation District Guide which could help Ypsilanti bring food industries, from production to consumption, to the site. The site may also be a natural place to cluster sustainable energy companies, building on the green and permaculture movements within Ypsilanti.

Figure 29: Angstrom Property Concept Plan



The concept plan to the left is a possible redevelopment layout for the parking lot portion of the Angstrom property. The floodplain of the Huron River may shift some of the building locations shown.

The street layout continues the existing street network and block pattern. Buildings are placed in an urban setting, with parking pooled behind the buildings.

The trail network, shown in brown, is continued on either side of the property.

This area is intended to remain a jobs district. Redevelopment would be at the initiative of the property owners. Drawing by AECOM

220 NORTH PARK ST.

This a 4.46 acre property owned by the city that sits along the railroad track. In 2017, the site was assessed for residential development. It was determined, based on a target market study, that the site was a good candidate for owner-occupied townhomes. The concept called for a 44-unit townhome development that was not well-received by the neighborhood, and has since sat vacant. The site is located close to Depot Town and the future train station on a grid street network. It is primarily surrounded by residential uses but across the railroad track is a mix of commercial and industrial uses, and it is not far from a commercial corridor on E. Michigan Ave.

In November of 2019 and January 2020, two meetings were held with the public about what they would like to see on this property. The results were varied. Immediate neighbors wished to see the site converted to a park- potentially with art or a pond- or a small number of single-family homes that conform to the existing neighborhood. There was also interest in building along the perimeter of the parcel to protect the pond in the center. Some preferred denser development that allowed around 20 units ranging from single-family to four-plexes. In general, the consensus was on low-to-moderate residential development that was not tall enough to block neighbor's views.

1901 HURON RIVER DRIVE

The 6.5 acre site is privately-owned. The site is primarily a wooded lot with one single-family home. The home's driveway has access to N. Huron River Drive but is set over 100 ft back from the right-of-way. Due to the variety of surrounding uses, this site has the potential be used in many ways that are beneficial to Ypsilanti. This parcel is located close to St Joseph Mercy Hospital, EMU facilities, and the Border-to-Border Trail. Its proximity to both multi-family units and a single-family development provides opportunity for this site to be developed either way.

In January 2020, when residents were asked to share their preferred development for this site, it was overwhelmingly for housing. As expected, suggestions spanned the range of mixed-use office space with lofts above, missing middle housing types, and a large apartment complex with 10% affordable housing. Aside Huron River Drive, this is a contiguous wooded lot that is proximal to the river. Consideration for the existing ecosystem should be made on this site.

1901 Huron River Drive



220 North Park St.



DRAFT

Chapter 11 – Implementation

“Enough planning, now doing” – Favorite phrase of Master Plan Steering Committee Member

The previous chapters provide the guiding values for the City, a snapshot of it in 2013, the framework for the future and the vision of the next twenty years. Many of the projects, such as the bridge over the Huron River extending Water Street, are ambitious. Others are changes in process or regulation. This chapter consolidates the Master Plan into a policy road map.

THREE FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

The City of Ypsilanti will invest resources – staff time and budget, if available – in the following fundamental steps to implement the Master Plan:

Form-Based Code

The current zoning ordinance is use-based and not well-equipped to implement this plan due to reasons outlined in Chapter 3. A form-based code will create a coherent regulatory system to create a safe, diverse, sustainable city. *The zoning ordinance was updated in 2014 to include the form-based “building types” within the “Walkable Urban Districts.”*

Process for Water Street Sale Approval based on Urban Design Standards

Water Street must become an asset to the City rather than a source of controversy. The urban design standards laid out in the previous chapter guarantee an urban form like the Historic Downtown and Depot Town, areas that have been sustained for over a century.

Conversion of One-Way Streets to Two-Way Streets The conversion of Huron, Hamilton, Cross and Washtenaw to two-way streets have been in several previous plans by the City. The conversions will only happen with cooperation from MDOT and investment of time and money. WATS should be utilized as a resource for data, research, scheduling, and facilitation. The City must invest staff time to discuss a process with MDOT and search for money to fund these conversions. Partnerships with Eastern Michigan University, Washtenaw County and other actors must be used as well.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

To that end, the City must build community relationship as part of the implementation of this plan. The following steps should be undertaken and integrated as part of everyday operations, if they have not been already:

Establish partnership with merged school district

The newly formed Ypsilanti Community Schools will influence the lives of Ypsilanti residents and their property values. The City should establish a regular means of communication, be it a standing meeting between the mayor and the School Board Chair, superintendent, manager, or a committee to talk about cooperation. The City should also reach out to the school district to coordinate the sale or reuse of district-owned properties within the city limits.

Continue and expand project-based learning

Participants felt activities for youth were essential. The eco-districts in City parks would be a natural place for project-based learning in partnership with local educational institutions - Ypsilanti Community Schools, Eastern Michigan University, University of Michigan and Washtenaw Community College.

Engage with joint projects with neighboring communities

Neighboring municipalities share many of the challenges as the City. Joint projects - such as road improvements, joint plans, and economic development initiatives - should be pursued.

Build community with neighborhoods

Participants frequently expressed pride in their neighborhoods. Festivals and gatherings in parks were often key to that feeling of community. The City can facilitate community building within neighborhoods by maintaining safe, clean parks and offering services to help with events, such as trash pick up.

Encourage cooperation between neighborhoods

During the first round of focus groups, participants expressed disappointment or frustration that neighborhoods were often at odds with one another. The City can use structures in place, such as the Community Policing Action Council (CoPAC), to bring neighborhood representatives together. However, some feel

the responsibility also lies with neighborhood associations to extend warm invitations to those across the street to join them in an effort or activity.

Celebrate each other's successes

Participants often were frustrated that people in Ypsilanti operate in their own silos. The City can set a tone to break down silos by celebrating the successes of all Ypsilanti residents and businesses, as well as those of neighboring municipalities.

ZONING PLAN - FORM-BASED CODE

In the Fall of 2013, the City of Ypsilanti is scheduled to undertake a rewrite of its Zoning Ordinance to a form-based code. Many pieces of the City's current code can be preserved and integrated while introducing a form-based code approach. The goal is to retain what is working, while providing new standards that improve areas and also allow for the distinct districts to maintain the current fabric of the area or provide new context for undeveloped land.

The vision, guiding values and plans documented in this Master Plan will guide the formation of the form-based code.

Per the requirements of section 33 (2) (d) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008), the Zoning Plan on the following pages describes the relationship between categories on the Framework Map in Chapter 4 and the zoning districts in the City.

Each of the framework districts in the form based code would include:

- Easy to follow procedures and standards for renewable energy facilities, including solar panels on all buildings
- Creation of a no building zone for steep slopes along Huron River for safety and environmental preservation.
- Alignment and streamlining of City processes for planning, renovation and construction
- Historic preservation regulation allow re-use in 21st century economy, especially for houses of worship
- Permit process for food trucks beyond temporary event, possibly in limited locations to be determined during the zoning ordinance process
- Expansion of food producing plants as part of landscaping

ROLE OF CITY STAFF

If the City staff is doing their job well, no one should notice. They are the stage managers for the thousands of details required in the daily municipal functions that facilitate safe development within the City. Staff, particularly those in the Planning, Building and Public Service Departments, need the capacity and time to address the following everyday:

- Existing small business development and expansion through phone calls, meetings and knowledge of appropriate places for expansion
- Quick and streamlined approval processes
- Attraction of new building to redevelopment areas, as well as other available land within the City
- Improvements of pedestrian connections
- Completion of the bicycle network
- Installation of ADA ramps at all intersections
- Rehabilitation of existing structures by working with the owners of those properties to leverage private/public funds
- Stabilization of neighborhoods through consistent code enforcement, community policing and communication.

ANNUAL EVALUATION & PLANNING

According to the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the Planning Commission must submit an annual report, work plan and budget to City Council in time for consideration of the next budget cycle. The following portions of this Master Plan should be used as tools to prepare those materials:

- **The Decision Making Rubric in Chapter 2:** The Planning Commission should examine the measures in achieving the Guiding Values.
- **The Implementation Matrix:** Located in the appendix, it is a compilation of the matrices at the ends of chapters 6-9. The Planning Commission should track whether, how and/or if the City is implementing these items as planned and adjust work plans accordingly based on resources and the Guiding Principles.
- **Three Fundamental Steps:** Found at the start of this chapter, the Planning Commission should evaluate progress or achievement of these steps and communicate to City Council the work, resources and support needed.

Figure 30: Zoning Plan

Framework Category	Form-Based Zoning District(s)	Description of character and uses	Notes
Center	Center	The intent of these zones is to maintain and expand the pedestrian oriented character of the downtown, central business district, and other centers of activity. The physical form is of an urban character with uses that promote office, retail and entertainment venues, with upper story residential uses permitted.	Includes the Downtown, Depot Town, Water Street area and Cross Street area adjacent to EMU
General Corridor	General Corridor, Neighborhood Corridor	Primarily suburban in form and are currently limited to auto-oriented commercial and office uses that are adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Corridors contain a variety of medium to smaller parcels and are adjacent to both types of neighborhoods. They will allow parking on the street and require buildings to be closer to the street; with minimal yards, lots will have more buildable area for residential, commercial and office uses mixed throughout.	Includes large portions of Washtenaw Avenue, Michigan Avenue, Harriet Street, Prospect and Huron River Drive.
Historic Corridor	Historic Corridor	Dominated by large, historic homes now used in a variety of ways – residences, office, and retail. Houses of worship and other civic buildings also line these corridors.	Includes areas adjacent to Central Neighborhoods and Centers
Central Neighborhood	Neighborhood Core (3 Districts)	The physical form of structures shifts to a residential character with flexibility in use. Live/work housing, personal services, corner retail and small offices are evident in this district. Buildings are spaced closely, but are separated by setbacks.	<p>Most of the City’s historic neighborhoods, and some others with strong grid structures, are included in this area.</p> <p>The residential buildings types and uses vary on a spectrum with the Historic East Side with the least variety and near campus areas with the most. Three zoning designations are anticipated to preserve the existing character ranging from single-family to a large variety.</p>
Outlying Neighborhood	Outlying Neighborhood, Multiple-Family	Low density suburban-style residential areas, consisting of predominately detached housing types, with some two-family houses throughout the area or higher-density, suburban style apartment buildings. These neighborhoods will have uses largely limited to the type of residential for which they were built. In some areas, like the Heritage Park neighborhood in the southwest part of the City, zoning would be changed so that duplexes and group homes would no longer be allowed by right.	Neighborhoods built in the middle or later part of the 20th century and include a single type of housing, adjacent to a corridor but the street network is designed to carry traffic into the neighborhood, not through it.
District	SD Special Districts	Areas of the city dedicated to a single type of activity. Special zoning districts will be developed for each of these areas	Includes EMU, Highland Cemetery, the human and health services area on Towner, the area around the railroad tracks and the industrial areas in the south of the City.

These tools should also be used in to prepare a work plan for the five-year master plan update. Additional information on how to prepare for that event is in the next section.

FIVE-YEAR MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Per the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, the City of Ypsilanti must revisit this master plan every five years after its adoption to assess whether an update is needed. The City should use the implementation matrix in the appendix to track progress. If milestones have not been met, the City needs to re-evaluate its commitment to those items and change the Master Plan.

At the very least, the City should analyze neighborhoods to see if and how they have changed. Using data regularly collected and updated by the City, the data portion of the process should analyze trends in homeownership and rental dwellings, the type of dwellings in terms of numbers of units, and the amount of investment in homes by building permits. These numbers should be then focused through the lenses of safety, diversity and sustainability. Sometimes, those goals might be at odds with one another. For instance, if a neighborhood experiences gentrification, with a wave of more well-off homeowners moving in, the diversity of a neighborhood and sustainable equity may be threatened. With that knowledge, the City would then engage the residents in a process to decide priorities and next steps.

If progress is happening and staff time or budget is available, the following items warrant attention that was not possible in this process:

Leforge and Huron River Drive Reconfiguration

This intersection not only between roads but between the City and the University does not function well for pedestrians and acts as a barrier. An intense design process, like a charrette, for this area is needed to find

fixes to the existing infrastructure. At the very least, this intersection should be examined as part of an update on the two-way conversion of streets.

Financing for sustainable energy and energy efficiency

An implementation step in the City's Climate Action Plan, focus groups for this process designated a sustainable energy financing program, such as a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) initiative, a 5 to 20 year priority. Additional planning and effort will be needed to start such a program.

Food Access

Throughout the process, residents asked for better food access in the City, specifically a full-line grocery store. While full-line grocery stores are located within a ten-minute drive of every residence in the City, the industry standard for location of those businesses, many residents can only reach them by bus. In focus groups at the senior high-rise downtown and the Chidester apartments, residents spoke about how buses ran infrequently between their homes and grocery stores located outside the City or not at all, particularly on weekends.

Congress and Ballard

Due to the intersection of three streets, this entrance to the Historic Downtown warrants in depth study to create a safety and preserve the context.

CONCLUSION

This plan is rooted in the facts and people of Ypsilanti today. Both will change with time, but the principles of safety, diversity, and sustainability hopefully will be guiding values for tomorrow.

Appendix

ORIGINAL SHAPE YPSILANTI MASTER PLAN (2013)

CONSULTANT TEAM

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2020 PLAN UPDATE

CITY OF YPSILANTI CITY COUNCIL

Lois Richardson, Mayor Pro-Tem, Ward 1
Nicole Brown, Ward 1
Jennifer Symanns, Ward 2
Steve Wilcoxon, Ward 2
Anthony Morgan, Ward 3
Annie Somerville, Ward 3

CITY OF YPSILANTI PLANNING COMMISSION

Matt Dunwoodie, Chair
Jared Talaga, Vice-Chair
Eric Bettis
Michael Borsellino
Michael Davis, Jr.
Jessica Donnelly
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Implementation Matrix

Action	Time Frame	Location	Actions underway	Completion date
Continue and increase rental inspections and enforcement	Ongoing	All neighborhoods		
Assist continuation and expansion of EMU Live Ypsi program	Ongoing	All neighborhoods		
Plan and zone for range of housing typologies for the needs of all ages and abilities	Ongoing	All neighborhoods		
Continue and expand the number, type and location of festivals and events	Ongoing	All centers		
Finish upper stories	Ongoing	All Centers		
Maintain and expand transportation options	Ongoing	Downtown		
Create “Welcome to Ypsilanti” packages for new EMU students, including web version	1-5 years	EMU		
Encourage use or redevelopment of unused parking lots	1-5 years	Towner		
Encourage development of vacant parking areas	1-5 years	Job Districts		
Align economic development incentives and programs to encourage emerging sectors that align with the Guiding Values and the employment potential of residents	1-5 years	All Districts		
Establish “Aging in Place” Programs	1-5 years	All neighborhoods		
Draft a business attraction plan for Downtown, Depot Town and Cross Street	1-5 years	All centers		

Encourage business and event activity during the day and evening	1-5 years	All centers		
Create a marketing campaign for the City of Ypsilanti	1-5 years	All centers		
Build curbless “festival” street on Washington	1-5 years	Downtown		

Action	Time Frame	Location	Actions underway	Completion date
Use vacant storefronts for temporary retail uses	1-5 years	Downtown		
Permanent year-round home for Downtown Farmer’s Market	1-5 years	Downtown		
Permanent year-round home for Depot Town Farmer’s Market	1-5 years	Depot Town		
Separate Cross Street and Washtenaw Avenue	1-10 years	Cross Street		
Create a “front door” for EMU in the area created by the reconfiguration of Cross Street and Washtenaw	1-10 years	EMU		
Restore two-way function to Cross, Huron and Hamilton Streets	1-10 years	Historic corridors		
Restore Harriet Street as the Main Street of adjacent neighborhoods	1-10 years	General Corridors		
Create “Eco-Districts” in neighborhood parks	1-10 years	All neighborhoods		
Install a way-finding system	1-10 years	All centers		
Increase walkability (2-way streets & raised intersections)	1-10 years	Downtown		
Build curbless “festival” street on River and Cross Streets	1-10 years	Depot Town		
Create a public space at new train station	1-10 years	Depot Town		

DRAFT

Approach on Two-Way Street Conversion

The following lists approaches to be used by the City when approaching MDOT on two-way street conversions.

Approach

1. Express the City’s intent to the MDOT to restore two-way operations on the streets within the City and the transfer of the streets’ jurisdiction to the City in the City’s official plan and in direct communications with the MDOT.
2. Review the City’s transportation plan with the MDOT so they understand the overall concept.
3. Review the key reasons with MDOT about why the changes to the streets makes sense.
 - a. Benefits of being bicycle-friendly and pedestrian-friendly.
 - b. Benefits of direct routing for motorists and cyclists.
 - c. Safety benefits of slower speeds, less weaving/speeding, and roundabouts.
 - d. Economic development and property value benefits.
 - e. City identity and aesthetic benefits.
 - f. Way-finding and legibility benefits.
 - g. Quality of life benefits.
4. Make the case for MDOT to fund the project:
 - a. The bottom line is that, at the end of the day, MDOT will have these streets “off of their books” and the City will have some “20-year” streets.
 - b. The streets involved have long lost their state role.
 - c. The City does not want to incur the maintenance costs of the streets while the streets are in their current state.
 - d. The streets are in their current state due to the state’s past needs/values for accommodating through traffic and high levels of service for motorists through the City; a condition that is no

longer exists. The future for the streets, as per the City’s plans, are now in the best interest of the City and the area.

- e. The idea is that once the streets are restored to a condition (i.e., a 20-year street), then it makes sense for the City to assume the jurisdiction of the streets, and then the jurisdictional transfer should take place. The changes include the two-way restorations, cross-section changes, and underground utility work; according to the City’s specifications.

Note that the above was written under the assumption that there is no need for the MDOT to keep jurisdiction over any of the affected streets. If there is a need to keep a route under MDOT’s jurisdiction, the route should be Huron and Cross. However, it is hoped that this does not occur.

The final steps are:

1. Have the MDOT fund a the implementation plan (i.e., traffic study, the surface design/ traffic control changes, utility assessment and changes, staging, etc.)
2. Implement the project.
3. Transfer the jurisdiction.

PHASES FOR TWO-WAY CONVERSIONS

The following are potential phases of two-way conversions:

1. Lowell; Huron north of Cross; Hamilton north of Cross; Perrin north of Cross
2. Cross; Emmet; Washtenaw; Hamilton north of Washtenaw; Perrin north of Washtenaw
3. Remainder of Hamilton; remainder of Huron; Harriet

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**Report and Recommendations of the City of Ypsilanti
Citizen Committee on Housing Affordability and
Accessibility**

Submitted to the City of Ypsilanti Planning Commission

July 2020

Executive Summary

Throughout 2016 and 2017, members of the public repeatedly voiced concerns to the City of Ypsilanti Planning Commission regarding (1) rising rents in the City that were putting people at risk of displacement, and (2) limited physical accessibility of the City's aging housing stock. In response to these concerns, the Planning Commission voted in December 2017 to charter a citizen sub-committee to study the issues of housing affordability and accessibility, and to "develop and issue recommendations for specific land use and policy changes for consideration by the Planning Commission and (upon invitation) City Council."

The purpose of the sub-committee, as described in its founding charter, was to inform updates to the City of Ypsilanti's 2013 Master Plan with a focus on preserving and enhancing housing affordability and accessibility, in keeping with the guiding values that "anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti."

The first phase of the committee's work was devoted to fact-finding in subgroups, and was followed immediately by a second phase focusing on analysis of the situation. **Five problem statements** were formulated to capture the key challenges facing the City with respect to housing affordability and accessibility:

- **The cost of housing is increasing steadily.** After the crash of the housing market in 2008, Ypsilanti saw a steep decline in housing prices, accompanied by an increase in foreclosures and a decline in the homeownership rate due to an influx of "house flipping," whereby landlords and speculators purchased foreclosed homes and converted them into investment properties. For-sale housing prices remained low for several years post-crisis before starting to pick up again in 2012-2013. Since then, available housing stock has dried up, leading to a very low vacancy rate, increases in demand, and higher prices for both rental and for-sale housing.
- As a result of these trends, housing in Ypsilanti is **increasingly unaffordable for many residents**. Because a strong majority of housing units in Ypsilanti (69.2%) are renter-occupied, and because renters in Ypsilanti have lower incomes, on average, than homeowners, renters are disproportionately affected by increasing housing costs. However, a significant proportion of homeowners in Ypsilanti are also affected. In total, Nearly half of households in Ypsilanti are cost-burdened (meaning >30% of household income goes to housing costs), and Ypsilanti has significantly higher rates of cost burden than both Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County as a whole.
- **Existing data and measures do not adequately capture the local situation with respect to housing affordability and accessibility.** There is a pressing need for improved measures and additional information to paint a more comprehensive picture of the nature and magnitude of housing affordability and accessibility challenges, and how it impacts specific populations, including seniors, people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and school-aged youth experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness.
- **Ypsilanti's old housing stock poses health, safety and accessibility challenges.** While Ypsilanti's old and historic homes add character to the City, their age and

condition present challenges for affordability and accessibility. Most homes were constructed before contemporary health and safety codes were in place; and just one in 10 houses or apartments in Ypsilanti was built in the 1990s or later,¹ when updates to the Fair Housing Act and building codes began requiring some accessibility features in new housing, such as stepless entry and ground-level bathrooms and bedrooms. As a result, Ypsilanti residents face health risks from lead paint, radon exposure, and mold; high heating bills from poor insulation; and difficulty finding housing that will accommodate a disability. Rental households are at increased risk for all of these factors. In addition to a general lack of accessible housing, there are few housing options adapted to the needs of seniors, many of whom live on modest fixed incomes and/or have limited physical mobility.

- **Ypsilanti does not have a lot of land available to build new housing.** Nearly all land in the City has already been developed, limiting opportunities for construction of new housing. Much of the land that is currently vacant, like Water Street, is considered “brownfield,” meaning past industrial activity has left behind contamination that adds cleanup costs to development; other available parcels have potential or actual wetlands on them. There are significant limits on what types of homes can be built, due to a combination of zoning restrictions (e.g. minimum building envelopes, setback requirements) and historic preservation requirements. And because new housing is typically more expensive than existing housing -- especially in the Ann Arbor construction market, where labor costs are relatively high -- replacing older housing with new construction has the potential to exacerbate housing affordability issues.
- **Current and past policies at the state and local levels have contributed to our affordability and accessibility challenges.** The City of Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance limits construction and conversion of multi-unit dwellings and smaller-scale single-unit dwellings through a combination of single-family zoning, accessory dwelling unit (ADU) restrictions, and residential lot and building envelope requirements. In addition, the City currently imposes a limit of three (3) on the number of unrelated adults that may occupy a single dwelling, a regulation that is stricter than in surrounding communities and which contributes to under-utilization of available housing units. Inadequate oversight by the State of Michigan in administering federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to private real estate developers led to the exploitation of a loophole that allowed several apartment complexes in Ypsilanti City and Township to shed their affordability requirements far ahead of schedule. Seniors residing at Cross Street Village apartments have seen dramatic escalation in rent as a result.

Based on the above understanding of the problem, our committee designed and implemented a multi-stage public engagement process consisting of:

- **A Housing Affordability & Accessibility Survey** to gather up-to-date information on the nature and magnitude of housing affordability and accessibility issues experienced by Ypsilanti residents. The survey was circulated online and via paper questionnaires

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, “Selected Housing Characteristics”

and was completed by more than 500 respondents between October 2018 and January 2019.

- **Interviews** with three landlords of residential properties in Ypsilanti (one with a small number of rental properties, one with a moderate number of rental properties, and one with a large number of rental properties).
- An **Open Forum** to present the survey and interview findings to the public and to solicit public input on a preliminary set of housing affordability and accessibility strategies for the City of Ypsilanti.
- An **Ypsilanti Housing Strategies Survey** to gather quantitative feedback from Ypsilanti residents on the favorability of specific housing strategies in six key domains: (1) Renters' rights, (2) Sustainable development strategies, (3) Need-based assistance strategies, (4) Physical accessibility strategies, (5) Zoning strategies, and (6) Partnership and advocacy strategies. The Housing Strategies Survey was launched online on September 3, 2019 and closed on October 22, 2019. More than 360 responses were collected.
- Finally, the committee welcomed public comment and input through its standing monthly meetings, held from January 2018 to May 2019.

Despite efforts to solicit input from a representative cross-section of Ypsilanti residents, the survey demographics indicate that some groups were underrepresented while others were overrepresented. Males, Black/African Americans, and renters were underrepresented in the survey by a significant margin.

Our **key findings** with respect to housing affordability are the following:

- Prices of both for-sale and rental housing are **rising fast** and show no signs of abating, in line with national trends.
- The most **commonly used measures** of housing affordability fail to capture the total cost of housing as experienced by most Ypsilanti residents, and especially those who earn the median income or less. Monthly rents do not capture the full picture with respect to the cost of rental housing; most rentals require a deposit equal to a full month's rent.
- Over half (54.6%) of Ypsilanti renters are **cost-burdened** with respect to housing, meaning that they spend more than 30% of their income on housing.² Data from the committee's Housing survey closely track ACS data on this point.
- The consequences of the **boom-bust cycle in for-sale housing** have not been the same for all residents and stakeholders. Real estate investors -- some local, others from outside of the area -- who bought homes in Ypsilanti during the housing crisis in order to "flip" them have profited from increasing sales prices. Many Ypsilanti homeowners who purchased their homes at depressed prices (i.e. from 2008 to 2013) have seen their

² Gross rent as a percentage of household income (GRAPI) for the City of Ypsilanti in 2017, according to the US Census Bureau ACS.

property values escalate rapidly since 2013, resulting in substantial growth in home equity.

- The flip side of these benefits to investors and newer homeowners has been a sharp **decline in access to homeownership** for Ypsilanti residents who currently rent their homes, especially those ages 25 to 34. In addition, the boom-bust housing cycle -- by first displacing people with limited wealth and/or income from their homes through foreclosure or short sales and then making it difficult or impossible for them to afford another home in the same neighborhood -- has had a gentrifying effect.
- The **consequences of rising rents** have been acutely felt by Ypsilanti residents, particularly those with lower incomes. Some of the disruptive effects have included frequent moves motivated by sharp rent increases; being forced to settle for poorly maintained rental units that are less accessible to public transportation and other essential amenities; displacement, especially among seniors and people with disabilities; housing insecurity; and homelessness.
- **Source-of-income discrimination** appears to be a problem for renters in Ypsilanti, with 9.3% of housing survey respondents indicating they have been denied housing based on their source of income.
- Protecting and advancing housing affordability and accessibility will require **decisive and sustained action at multiple levels** of government, including the municipal, county, state, and federal levels. Collaborating with policymakers and officials at other levels of government will be essential to ensuring that all people, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti.
- One-size-fits-all solutions do not apply; we will need a **combination of strategies** that are tailored to the specific housing needs and preferences of Ypsilanti residents, including young people, seniors who wish to age in place and people with disabilities.

Our **key findings** with respect to housing **accessibility** are the following:

- Only a small portion of units offer wheelchair accessibility, and houses often require modifications to doorways, bathrooms, and kitchens to serve a resident with a disability.³
- The City of Ypsilanti 2012-2016 census statistics reported that 6.7% of persons under 65 have a disability, or about 1400 disabled persons (auditory, visual, cognitive, ambulatory impairments).⁴
- Accessibility is not limited to the needs of wheelchair users. According to a broader definition of disability, 32% of Ypsilanti residents are living with a disability of some type.⁵ The highest concentrations of residents with a disability are in areas with the lowest average incomes.

³ While there are several of these facilities that offer these amenities, they often have limited availability. Namely, Cross Street Village, River Rain Apartments, 422 Pearl, 420 Emmet, 404 N Huron, Peninsular Place, UGA Townhomes, and recently renovated Ypsilanti Housing Authority units.

⁴ Figures exclude seniors and use a narrow definition of disability ("Serious difficulty with four basic areas of function – hearing, vision, ambulation, cognition").

⁵ Fair Housing Act defines a person with a disability as an individual for whom a physical or mental impairment limits one or more major life activities.

- AARP/Harvard reports that 90% of seniors plan to age in place, and SEMCOG estimates the over-65 demographic will increase in our area by 240% by 2035. Given the proportions of owner-occupied to rental units in the City, it is important to create accessible options in both categories.
- Survey results further emphasize these basic facts, with two-thirds of survey respondents (66.7%) reported that their homes have no accessibility features. Over 1 in 4 reported that barriers to physical accessibility in a home had limited their quality of life.
- Many survey respondents say that accessibility is a consideration in the selection of their next residence with over half of respondents saying a ramp or step-free entrance would be a factor in their choice, and at least 1 in 5 saying that every accessibility option listed in the survey would be a desirable factor from parking, to bathroom and kitchen amenities, to doorways and elevators.

Based on input and feedback from 361 respondents who reviewed 26 housing strategies included in the committee's Housing Strategies survey, our committee recommends that the City consider adoption and implementation of **11 strategies**. The selected proposals reflect the input of Ypsilanti residents who engaged with this survey and, if implemented, will respond to pressing housing needs and start to correct housing inequities in Ypsilanti. They are:

1. **Tenant Right of First Refusal:** Enact a 'Tenant Right of First Refusal' ordinance mandating that tenants receive advance notice when their landlord intends to sell the property and have the opportunity to purchase the property before it is offered for sale to outside buyers.
2. **Just Cause Ordinance:** Enact a 'Just Cause' ordinance to protect renters from wrongful and/or retaliatory displacement. The ordinance would bar landlords from evicting or refusing to renew a tenant's lease without 'just cause' such as failure to pay rent or a violation of lease terms, pursuant to Michigan Act 18 of 1933.
3. **Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance:** Enact an Affordability & Accessibility Ordinance that 1) defines the parameters for affordable & accessible housing based on the City of Ypsilanti's Area Median Income (AMI) and 2) requires new housing developments to include a percentage of affordable and accessible units based on Ypsilanti's need.
4. **Homeless Shelter:** Construct or establish an overnight shelter in Ypsilanti to help meet needs of residents experiencing homelessness.
5. **Community Land Trust:** Work with local non-profit agencies and neighboring communities to establish a Community Land Trust (CLT) to promote long-term housing affordability and accessibility through community control of land. Community Land Trusts are nonprofit, community-based organizations designed to ensure community stewardship of land. CLTs provide an opportunity for democratic ownership of land with private ownership of the structure on the land in order to maintain long-term housing affordability. CLT properties can be interspersed throughout one or more neighborhoods and can include rental homes and businesses.

6. **Assist low-income residents with home-buying:** Assist low-income residents who wish to purchase a home by offering credit improvement services, and mortgage down-payment assistance.
7. **Minor home repair:** Establish a Minor Home Repair Program to assist with the cost of essential home repairs for eligible low-income and disabled homeowners. Eligible repairs could include roof replacement, plumbing replacement, mechanical or electrical replacements, ADA ramp installation or repair, door modifications, and lead or mold remediation.
8. **Visitability ordinance:** Enact a Visitability Ordinance to ensure that newly constructed homes incorporate basic accessibility features that make it easier for mobility-impaired people to visit or live in Ypsilanti. A home is “visitable” if it has: (1) at least one no-step entrance; (2) doors with 32 inches of clear passage space; and (3) a bathroom on the main floor that is wheelchair-accessible.
9. **Increase the number of non-related adults who may occupy a dwelling:** Increase the number of unrelated individuals who may reside together in a dwelling by changing the Zoning Ordinance definition of “Family” to include a limit of two unrelated persons for each bedroom in the dwelling.
10. **Rent Control:** Advocate with state lawmakers to grant municipalities the authority to cap annual rent increases.
11. **Ask local universities to invest in the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund:** Advocate with the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund and to actively support other county-wide housing affordability measures.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest due to systemic racial inequities, we share a conviction that it is more urgent than ever for local governments to proactively address the needs and interests of communities under duress. With a view to accelerating action, we offer a prospective three-phase pathway and timeline for rolling out housing policies and programs over the next 10 years.

Phase One (current Budget year)

Make the Ypsilanti Housing Trust permanent: Assure a sustainable funding source for housing affordability and accessibility by formalizing and making permanent the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund started by Councilmember Pete Murdock and nourishing it with an annual contribution of no less than \$100,000.

Allocate staff time to housing affordability and accessibility: Allocate a significant portion of an existing staff member’s time to the coordination and monitoring of City housing affordability and accessibility policy and to liaising with other units of government and partners on housing affordability and accessibility.

Draft and implement the Tenant Right of First Refusal ordinance (Strategy 1), the Just Cause Ordinance (Strategy 2), the Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance (Strategy 3), the Visitability

Ordinance (Strategy 8), and the Zoning Ordinance text amendment to increase the number of non-related adults who may occupy a single dwelling (Strategy 9) from three total to two persons per bedroom. (*The Planning Commission is also encouraged to consider additional changes to the Zoning Ordinance to reduce restrictions on construction and/or conversion of multi-unit homes, accessory dwelling units, and smaller-scale homes.*)

Begin advocating for State legislation to expand local authority to regulate rent increases (Strategy 10) and for local university contributions to the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund (Strategy 11).

Phase Two (Budget year 2021)

Draft an affordability-focused property acquisition plan that would go into effect in the event of another housing crisis resulting in a surge of foreclosures of multi-unit residences. The aim of this plan would be to ensure that such properties can be converted to sustainable affordable and accessible use, either in partnership with a local housing non-profit or through the launch of a Community Land Trust.

Introduce a home-buying assistance program (Strategy 6) and the Minor home repair program (Strategy 7).

Phase Three (Budget year 2022-2030)

Create and invest in institutions that promote community stability and build toward long range sustainable housing goals.⁶ Pursue affordability and accessibility-focused collaborations at the county and regional levels, with a view to leveraging resources from outside of the City of Ypsilanti. These would include the establishment of a Community Land Trust (Strategy 5) and the construction or establishment of an overnight homeless shelter (Strategy 4).

⁶ <https://shelterforce.org/2017/11/02/time-for-trickle-up-housing/>

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In Memoriam: Liz Dahl-MacGregor and Pete Murdock

In memory of Pete Murdock and Liz Dahl-MacGregor, their commitment to making Ypsilanti a more just and inclusive City, and their efforts to advance housing affordability and accessibility and the work of our committee towards that end.

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The following people contributed to the production of this report:

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Ashley Fox
Heidi Jugenitz
Cheranissa Roach
Nathanael Romero
Desirae Simmons

I. Context

A. Committee formation and mandate

The sub-committee on housing affordability and accessibility was formed by the City of Ypsilanti Planning Commission in December 2017. The purpose of the sub-committee, as described in its founding charter (see **Appendix A**), was to “review and update the City of Ypsilanti’s 2013 Master Plan with a focus on preserving and enhancing housing affordability and accessibility in keeping with the guiding values of the Master Plan.”

At the time the 2013 Master Plan was developed, Ypsilanti was still recovering from the housing crash of 2008, and housing affordability had not yet emerged as a high-visibility issue. The 2013 Master Plan process emphasized other aspects of the City’s built environment but did not address housing directly. It did, however, embrace as a guiding principle that “Anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti.”

From 2015 to 2017, in the course of its regular business, the Planning Commission heard repeatedly from members of the public about two issues: (1) rising rents in the City that were putting people at risk of displacement, and (2) limited physical accessibility of the City’s aging housing stock.

In response to these concerns, the Planning Commission chartered a citizen sub-committee to study the issues of housing affordability and accessibility, and to “develop and issue recommendations for specific land use and policy changes for consideration by the Planning Commission and (upon invitation) City Council.”

Per the charter, the sub-committee was to be comprised of:

- Up to four (4) members of the Planning Commission
- One member of the Human Relations Commission
- One member of the Sustainability Commission
- One member of the Ypsilanti Housing Commission board
- One representative of EMU
- One representative of Defend Affordable Ypsi
- One representative of Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living
- One representative of Avalon Housing
- One representative of civic affairs organization at the county or state level
- One Ypsilanti owner-occupant
- One Ypsilanti business owner (and employer)
- One lessor of rental properties in Ypsilanti
- Up to two members of the community at large.

B. Housing policy in the U.S.: A legacy of exclusion and impoverishment

Over time, many legalized forms of anti-Black racism and discrimination in the U.S. – from chattel slavery to Jim Crow laws and school segregation – have been phased out. In their place, other, more covert forms of institutional racism and discrimination have emerged. Past and present housing policy in the U.S. is fraught with examples of overt and covert racism and discrimination. These include racial segregation of federally-funded public housing developments; demolition of Black homes, businesses, and neighborhoods to build highways in the name of urban renewal; systematic denial of federal insurance for home mortgages in areas with Black residents (a practice known as redlining); and use of restrictive housing covenants. More recently, less conspicuous practices like real estate steering, racial targeting of high-risk mortgage loans, exclusionary zoning, and discrimination by landlords have been utilized to maintain racial and economic segregation within and across municipalities. The 2008 housing crisis – brought on by a proliferation of real estate speculation and subprime mortgage lending – produced an unprecedented wave of foreclosures that disproportionately affected Black and Latinx households⁷ and rapidly transferred homes and equity from residents to investors.⁸

The City of Ypsilanti has its own, well documented legacy of restrictive covenants, housing segregation, and urban renewal policies that have shaped the local housing landscape over the last century. Since 2010, rising demand and home prices in Ypsilanti, fueled in part by skyrocketing housing costs in Ann Arbor, have accelerated gentrification throughout the City, a subject of increasing concern in recent years. Gentrification is particularly visible in the racial demographics of the southwest portion of the City,⁹ which has become increasingly whiter over the last decade, a continuation of a pre-existing trend.

Housing discrimination and exclusion have severe, long-lasting consequences for Black households, communities, and the country as a whole. Restricted access to homeownership has dramatically limited equity-building; on average, a white household in the U.S. today has more than 11 times the wealth of a Black household.¹⁰ Many U.S. cities and schools are as racially and economically segregated as they were in the 1950s, and research has shown that cities with the greatest life expectancy gaps between census tracts are those where racial and ethnic segregation are most stark.¹¹

While local policy change is inadequate to eliminate systemic, centuries-old injustices in housing, it is nonetheless essential. The City of Ypsilanti has several tools at its disposal to begin the important work of addressing historical inequities and designing a City that is more open, inclusive, and just.

⁷ [Minorities hit harder by foreclosure crisis](#)

⁸ [The Eviction Machine: Neighborhood Instability and Blight in Detroit's Neighborhoods](#)

⁹ 68% of the southwest portion was African-American, down from 80% in 2010 (American Community Survey 2017).

¹⁰ [The black-white economic gap remains as wide as in 1968 - The](#)

¹¹ [Life Expectancy Follows Segregation in US Cities](#)

C. Ypsilanti's housing landscape

Ypsilanti's housing landscape reflects its people, past and present policies, and the prominent influence of Eastern Michigan University (EMU) on the City.

Demographics: In 2018, the City of Ypsilanti had an estimated population of 20,939. With a median age of 24.2, Ypsilanti residents are younger, on average, than residents of Michigan (39.8), Washtenaw County (33.6), and Ann Arbor (26.9).¹² Half of all households are headed by householders aged 15-34, and most householders in this age group rent their homes. There has been a recent drop-off in the share of householders ages 25 to 34 who own their homes; in 2010, 65% of householders in this age group rented versus 85% today.¹³ Seniors comprise just 7.2% of Ypsilanti's population compared with 17.7% statewide.

Ypsilanti has a larger percentage of Black residents than the County and the State. As of 2018, 27.3% of the population identified as Black or African American; 4.6% as Hispanic or Latinx; 4.4% as two or more races; and 2% as Asian. The proportion of the population identifying as White alone was 61.6%.¹⁴ The biggest change in the City's racial makeup since 2010 is a decline in the Black population from 31.9%¹⁵ to 27.3%. The loss of Black residents appears to be concentrated in the southwest portion of the City (census tract 4106), which was 90% Black in 2000, 80% Black in 2010, and 68% Black in 2018.

Since 2010, the City of Ypsilanti's population and average household size have both grown significantly, by 3% and 11% respectively,¹⁶ while Michigan has only seen population growth of 1% and no change in average household size during the same period.

Income: Median household income in Ypsilanti is \$36,982, compared to \$69,434 in Washtenaw County and \$54,938 in Michigan.¹⁷ An estimated 32% of households are living below the poverty line. However, both median household income and per capita income in Ypsilanti are rising, and the latter has grown by 9.5% since 2010.¹⁸

Aggregate measures of income in Ypsilanti mask sharp disparities across neighborhoods. The original 2013 Master Plan highlights these disparities, which track closely with racial composition and historical discrimination. As of 2010, the census tract containing College Heights -- a neighborhood that employed a racially restrictive covenant in the 1940s¹⁹ -- had a median household income of \$59,688, while the census tract containing Heritage Park, Worden

¹² ACS 2018 5-year estimates.

¹³ City of Ypsilanti Master Plan, updated 2020.

¹⁴ ACS 2018 5-year estimates.

¹⁵ 2010 Census.

¹⁶ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/MI,ypsilanticitymichigan/LND110210>.

¹⁷ <https://semcog.org/community-profiles/communities/4130#EconomyJobs>

¹⁸ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/MI,ypsilanticitymichigan/LND110210>.

¹⁹ <http://ypsiarchivesdustydiary.blogspot.com/2012/02/racially-restrictive-covenants-in.html>

Gardens, and Bell Kramer -- historically black neighborhoods -- had a median household income of \$18,828.

Quantity and type of housing units: The U.S. Census Bureau places the current number of housing units in the City of Ypsilanti at 8,868. Of these, 37.5% are single-unit homes (including 3,146 detached and 183 attached homes); 6.7% are part of two-unit homes; and 11.6% are part of three- or four-unit homes. Another 13.8% of housing units are located in structures with five to nine units; 12.4% in structures with 10 to 19 units; and 15.8% in structures with 20 or more units.²⁰ The spatial distribution of different home types within the City is described in greater detail in Chapter 3 of the Master Plan.

Housing tenure: Nearly 70% of Ypsilanti residents rent their homes, while 31.3% own their homes. This is effectively the inverse of the statewide pattern, and reflects both the young demographics of the City, the prominence of property management firms within Ypsilanti's housing market, and the consequences of the 2008 housing crisis, which shifted additional homes into the hands of real estate investors. Use of alternative housing tenures, such as cooperative housing and condominiums, is sparse, and there is no active land trust in the City.

Age of housing units: Just over 30% of housing units in Ypsilanti were constructed before 1940, and a full 50% of units were built before 1960. As buildable land in the City has diminished, so has the pace of construction; 332 units were added in the decade from 2000 to 2009, and since 2010, just 195 units have been constructed.

Land area and population density: Comprising just 4.33 square miles of land area, the City has a population density of approximately 4,800 people per square mile, comparable to that of Detroit today. By contrast, the City of Ann Arbor has a slightly lower population density of 4,100 people per square mile, while Ypsilanti Township has a much lower population density of 1,800 people per square mile.

Land use: Single-family homes account for 37.5% of Ypsilanti's roughly 9,000 housing units and 30% of its land. EMU and other tax-exempt uses occupy nearly 40% of the City's land area, a reality that constrains opportunities for construction of new housing. The 38-acre Water Street Redevelopment area that extends south from Michigan Avenue and east from the Huron River is the largest expanse of undeveloped land in the City. However, environmental contamination of sections of the land has thwarted past plans to build affordable housing there and continues to pose a financial barrier to the future development of the land for this purpose.

²⁰ ACS 2018.

II. Our Process

A. Fact-finding

The **first phase** of the committee's work was devoted to fact-finding. To facilitate in-depth review of existing (secondary) data and information on housing affordability and accessibility in the City of Ypsilanti, the committee formed five sub-groups:

- (1) a Housing Stock sub-group charged with assessing the quantity and quality of housing;
- (2) a Housing Market sub-group charged with examining trends in housing demand and pricing;
- (3) a Homelessness and Housing Insecurity sub-group charged with estimating the magnitude of homelessness and housing insecurity vis-a-vis available beds and housing;
- (4) a Density/Zoning sub-group charged with examining the existing zoning ordinance and its implications for housing affordability and accessibility; and
- (5) a Housing Accessibility sub-group charged with assessing the situation with respect to physical accessibility of housing for people with disabilities as well as those aging in place.

Housing Stock: Quantity and quality

To determine the state of housing in Ypsilanti, the subgroup on Housing Stock: Quality and Quantity consulted the following resources:

- CoStar Custom Market Report- Ypsilanti Market Overview. Costar is a real estate market analytics company that aggregates vacancy, rents, sales activity, etc. The Rental Vacancy Rates over time were highlighted by the Housing Stock Subgroup as a notable indicator of market changes.
- Rent.com, Zillow.com, and Ann Arbor Area Board of Realtors Multiple Listing Service data were monitored to track number and prices for active listings during the time of the subgroup activity- January-March 2018
- U.S. Census Bureau data was reviewed for housing unit counts over time, including a 5-year estimate for 2012-2016. The Housing Stock Subgroup drew from that same 5-year forecast to identify housing unit counts by the year the structure was built and for the number of units contained in the structure.
- Washtenaw County Staff provided counts of "committed affordable housing" through Low-Income Housing Tax Credit subsidies, Community Development Block Grants, and Housing Commission information. EMU housing counts were included with this information based on the Fall 2017 term, both for on-campus apartments and dorms.
- The SEMCOG 2045 Regional Development Forecast was referenced for expectations of changes to housing stock and population changes.

Available information on the condition of housing stock was identified as a shortcoming at the early stages of data collection, due to quality issues being complaint-based and therefore incomprehensive. Washtenaw County Public Health has the mandate to intervene in occurrences of lead, mold, pests, radon, etc., but aggregate data on these outcomes are not consistently available.

Housing Market: Trends in for-sale and for-rent demand, price

Data sources consulted by the subgroup on Housing Market Trends included:

- U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS), published annually. We analyzed multiple ACS indicators, including population and household counts by tenure (owner-occupied vs. renter-occupied), household income data and cost-burdened status, and median rent costs.
- The CoStar Market Report, which provided data on average asking rent by number of bedrooms.
- Rent.com and zillow.com rental listings posted from January to March 2018. Data analyzed included asking rents for properties located within the City of Ypsilanti.
- The Ann Arbor Area Board of Realtors Multiple Listing Service, which provided data on home sale prices helpful in estimating cost barriers facing home buyers.

The ACS presents multi-year estimates for many housing characteristics, and these estimates can differ markedly from “point-in-time” estimates, especially in periods of major or consistent change in housing. Given that local housing costs have been rising consistently over the past five years, ACS estimates of housing costs lag behind the reality.²¹

Homelessness and Housing Insecurity: Estimating the size of the homeless and housing insecure population

The homelessness and housing insecurity sub-group examined the available data on homelessness and housing insecurity in Ypsilanti. Homelessness was defined as those who are “sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g. living on the streets) or living in a homeless emergency shelter.” Housing insecurity was defined as those experiencing “frequent moving, staying w/friends or relatives, couch surfing, difficulty paying rent/mortgage, living in an unstable neighborhood, overcrowding in home, fleeing domestic violence, or more than 50% of income goes toward housing costs.”

Obtaining reliable estimates of the number of people experiencing housing insecurity and/or homelessness in Ypsilanti proved challenging due in part to the inadequacy of traditional survey instruments and methods to capture this information. Accordingly, the group focused on survey findings and service statistics from agencies that serve homeless and housing-insecure clients in Washtenaw County like Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (SAWC) Delonis Center and Ozone House.

Understanding barriers to securing housing and staying housed over time is critical to mounting an effective response, so the sub-group consulted with social service providers in Washtenaw County to enumerate a list of barriers -- individual and systemic -- faced by people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

²¹ [Understanding and Using ACS Single-Year and Multiyear Estimates](#)

Density and Zoning: Barriers to and facilitators of affordable, accessible housing

To characterize the current situation with respect to population density, zoning regulations, and housing affordability and accessibility, the Density and Zoning sub-group consulted the existing City of Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map (revised substantially in alignment with the 2013 *Shape Ypsi* Master Plan and amended multiple times since) as well as ACS data on population growth, housing unit availability, and vacancy rates.

The density and zoning sub-group also looked at broad patterns of land use within the City and analyzed the implications of these patterns for housing stock and prices.

Accessibility: Barriers to and facilitators of physical accessibility of housing

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public.²² The Fair Housing Act and building code updates since 1990 have required some accessibility standards in new housing.

The Accessibility sub-group examined the local situation with respect to the physical accessibility of housing for people with disabilities and people aging in place. To situate its analysis within the framework of federal law, the Accessibility sub-group reviewed Fair Housing Act and Americans with Disabilities Act definitions of housing accessibility-related terms, such as universal design, visitability, and reasonable accommodation.

The sub-group then consulted US Census and ACS data on the number of people with disabilities and the number of seniors in Ypsilanti, and reviewed maps displaying the percent of residents with a disability by census tract. Finally, the sub-group considered regional, statewide, and national data on the projected growth of the senior population, which is expected to increase demand for accessible housing substantially between now and 2035.

The following definitions guided the committee's work on accessibility. A home is **accessible** when a resident with a disability can live independently in that home. The most common form of housing accessibility is a design that supports a person using a wheelchair: first floor bathrooms and bedrooms, floor plans and door widths that can be moved through in a wheelchair, and similar. A home may be **adaptable** if it is not fully accessible, but allows for addition of accessibility features, e.g. through reinforced walls that can accommodate grab bars.

B. Problem definition

Following the presentation and discussion of sub-group findings, the committee proceeded to a **second phase**: definition and analysis of the problem (or situation). In this phase, information from the fact-finding phase was synthesized into a series of five "problem statements" that,

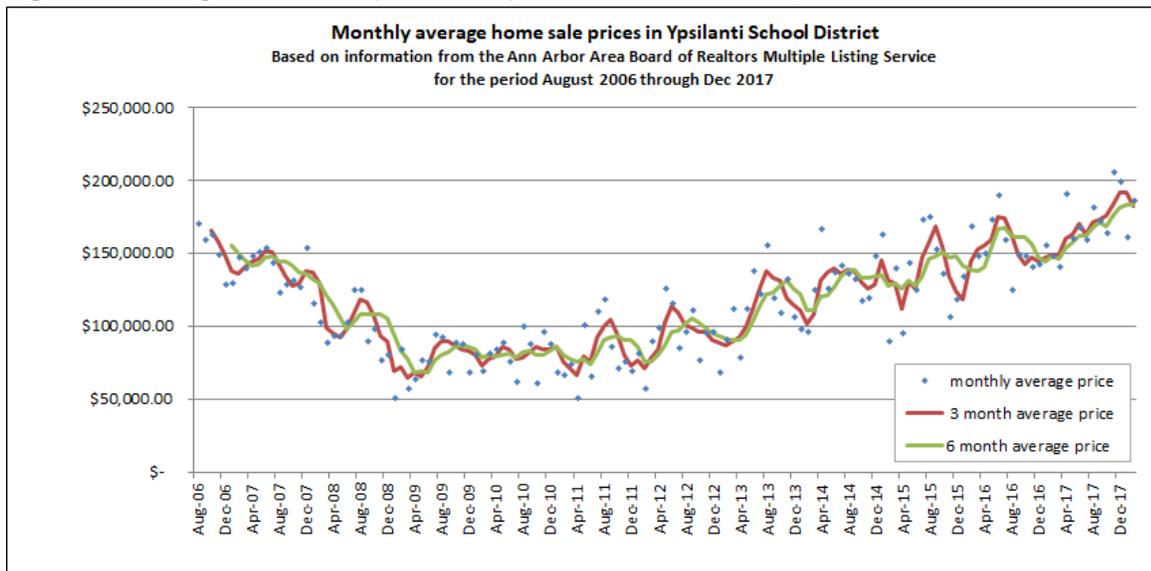
²² [An Overview of the Americans With Disabilities Act](#)

together, capture the essence of the situation with respect to housing affordability and accessibility in Ypsilanti.

Problem Statement #1: The cost of housing is increasing steadily.

After the crash of the housing market in 2008, Ypsilanti saw a steep decline in housing prices, accompanied by an increase in foreclosures and a decline in the homeownership rate due to an influx of “house flipping,” whereby landlords and speculators purchased foreclosed homes and converted them into investment properties. For-sale housing prices remained low for several years post-crisis before starting to pick up again in 2012-2013 (see Fig 1). Since then, available housing stock has dried up, leading to a very low vacancy rate (Fig 2), increases in demand, and higher prices for both rental and for-sale housing. Despite lower prices in comparison to other areas of Washtenaw County, housing in Ypsilanti is increasingly unaffordable for many residents. By way of illustration, a household earning the median income for Ypsilanti (\$35,000) can afford monthly housing costs of \$875 or less, including utilities (see Table 1). By contrast, the average asking rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Ypsilanti was \$897 in January 2018, (see Table 2), and average monthly housing costs for owner-occupied housing units was \$1367.²³

Figure 1: Average home sale prices in Ypsilanti School District, 2006 - 2017



²³ ACS 2018.

Figure 2: Housing Vacancy Rate, City of Ypsilanti, 2008 - 2017



Table 1: Affordable Rent Thresholds by Income Level

Annual Income	Rent at 30 Percent of Monthly Income
\$10,000	\$250
\$15,000	\$375
\$25,000	\$625
\$35,000	\$875
\$50,000	\$1,250
\$75,000	\$1,875
\$92,900	\$2,323

Table 2: Estimates of Average Monthly Rent in the City of Ypsilanti, by data source

	2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates	Costar, 2018	Online rental listings, January to March 2018*
	Median Gross Rent	Average Asking Rent	Median Asking Rent
No bedroom/Studio	\$587	\$744	\$685
1 bedroom	\$677	\$795	\$775
2 bedrooms	\$873	\$897	\$975
3 bedrooms	\$1,090	\$960	\$1,350
4 bedrooms	\$1,377	N/A	\$1,650
5 or more bedrooms	\$1,646	N/A	\$2,300

* Sources: rent.com and zillow.com active listings for dwellings located within the City of Ypsilanti (listings were accessed from January 15, 2018 to March 15, 2018).

Because a strong majority of housing units in Ypsilanti (69.2%) are renter-occupied, and because renters in Ypsilanti have lower incomes, on average, than homeowners, renters are disproportionately affected by increasing housing costs. However, a significant proportion of homeowners in Ypsilanti are also affected. The ACS 2017 found that:

- 49% of all households in Ypsilanti are cost-burdened, meaning they spend >30% of their income on housing and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.
- Rates of housing cost burden in Ypsilanti are highest among renters (54.6%), followed by homeowners with a mortgage (29.2%) and homeowners without a mortgage (12.9%).
- Rates of housing cost burden are higher among lower-income Ypsilanti residents regardless of housing tenure.
- Ypsilanti has higher rates of cost burden than Ann Arbor and Washtenaw county overall.

A growing number of new residents, including students coming to Ypsilanti for college and people relocating from Ann Arbor in search of more affordable housing, has contributed to affordability pressures. The City's population growth has outpaced growth in housing stock since 2012, and there is no indication that this trend will change soon.

Rapidly increasing housing costs are especially consequential for renters with lower incomes, who face mounting obstacles to remaining in their homes and communities. One proxy measure for these pressures is the 20.8% eviction rate in the City of Ypsilanti, which is higher than the statewide average (17%) and nearly 10 times as high as in neighboring Ann Arbor (2.2%).²⁴

Problem Statement #2: Existing data and measures do not adequately capture the local situation with respect to housing affordability and accessibility.

There is a pressing need for improved measures and additional information to paint a more comprehensive picture of the nature and magnitude of housing affordability and accessibility challenges, and how it impacts specific populations, including seniors, people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and school-aged youth experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness.

Area median income (AMI), the measure used to determine eligibility for federal housing assistance, is calculated on a countywide or metropolitan area-wide basis. In counties and metropolitan areas where household incomes are relatively similar across communities, AMI helps direct affordable housing resources to households with the lowest relative incomes. In counties and metropolitan areas with significant income variation across communities, like Washtenaw County, the effect is different. Because Ann Arbor is significantly larger and more affluent than Ypsilanti, it exerts outsized influence on Washtenaw County's AMI, which is \$69,434.²⁵ (By comparison, median income in the City of Ypsilanti is \$36,982.) The continuing use of countywide AMI to determine eligibility for affordable housing assistance has the effect of

²⁴ [MICHIGAN EVICTIONS: Trends, Data Sources, and Neighborhood Determinants](#)

²⁵ ACS 5-year estimate, 2014-2018.

punishing very low-income (<50% AMI) and extremely-low income households (<30% AMI), the majority of which are located in Ypsilanti, by forcing them to compete for scarce rental assistance resources with households earning up to 80% of AMI.

List prices of rental housing fail to capture the full cost of renting. Securing rental housing often requires payment of non-reimbursable application, credit check, and/or administrative fees as well as proof of renter's insurance, a utilities deposit, and a security deposit equivalent to a full month's rent (which increases with rent). Collectively, these costs can pose a significant barrier for renters, yet they are seldom acknowledged by policymakers seeking to advance housing affordability.

List prices of for-sale housing similarly fail to capture total cost of homeownership. Down payment requirements, combined with recurring costs (e.g. mortgage insurance, homeowner's insurance, home maintenance, and property taxes) put home ownership out of reach for many people without substantial savings and/or high incomes.

Seniors: According to the 2010 census, seniors represent 13% of the U.S. population, and this is expected to grow to 20% by 2030. AARP/Harvard find that 90% of seniors plan to age in place. SEMCOG estimates that by 2035, the number of residents over 65 living in Ypsilanti will reach 5,335, which represents a 240% increase over the last measurement. It is clear that the need for affordable senior housing will continue to grow between now and 2035. However, few data are available regarding housing preferences and needs of seniors in Ypsilanti.

People with disabilities: According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 1 in 5 Americans has a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities. By this broad definition, 32% of Ypsilanti residents have a disability, while 6.7% of Ypsilanti residents under the age of 65 (≈1400 residents) have a disability characterized by auditory, visual, cognitive, or ambulatory impairment. Disabilities -- and systemic discrimination against people with disabilities -- can limit economic activity and opportunity; nationwide, median income for people with disabilities is two-thirds of median income for people with no disability.²⁶ Within Ypsilanti, the areas with the highest concentrations of disabled residents also have the highest rates of poverty. However, there is no data available on the prevalence of housing insecurity among people with disabilities in Ypsilanti.

People experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity: While much effort has gone into developing standard definitions and metrics for housing affordability in the U.S., data and information gaps persist, especially with respect to homelessness and housing insecurity. According to the Washtenaw County Office of Community & Economic Development (OCED), 1,541 people experiencing homelessness in 2018 reported their last zip code as 48197 or 48198. People from Ypsilanti thus account for more than half (53%) of all those receiving

²⁶ US Census Bureau, 2015.

homelessness prevention, emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, or permanent supportive housing services. A 2018 survey conducted by Delonis Center found that 33% of clients listed Ypsilanti as their last place of residence, while approximately half (47.4%) of Ozone House clients listed 48198 or 48197 as the zip code of their last permanent residence. There is reason to believe that these figures underrepresent the true scale of homelessness in Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County. The SAWC estimates some 5,000 individuals are experiencing homelessness in Washtenaw County,²⁷ and the concentration of overnight shelters in Ann Arbor may lead people whose homelessness originated in Ypsilanti to report an Ann Arbor zip code where they have been staying more recently. Gaining a clear sense of the magnitude of homelessness in Ypsilanti remains a pressing priority.

Housing insecurity can be broadly defined as the condition of frequent moving, staying with friends or relatives, couch surfing, having difficulty paying rent/mortgage, living in an unstable neighborhood, overcrowding in the home, fleeing domestic violence, or spending more than 50% of household income goes toward housing costs. There is currently no federal definition by which to assess housing insecurity. However, based on ACS data on housing cost burden, it is estimated that approximately half of Ypsilanti residents could be experiencing some level of housing insecurity.

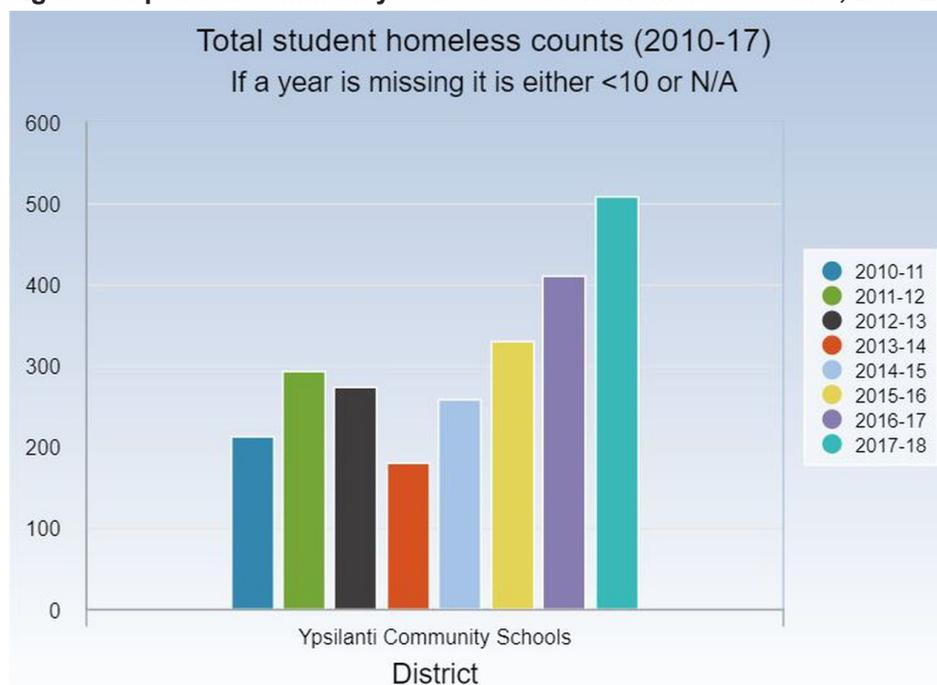
Homeless youth²⁸ face special obstacles; for example, they are unable to obtain housing vouchers or get on public housing waitlists until they are 18, and they lack the rental history required to qualify for renting in the private market. Former foster care youth, LGBTQ youth, and transition age youth (ages 18 to 24) are especially likely to experience homelessness and housing insecurity. The number of youth experiencing housing insecurity (including couch surfing or doubling up with friends or relatives) is presently unknown. *Fig 3* (below) shows the count of Ypsilanti Community Schools students experiencing homelessness by school year, from 2010-2011 to 2017-2018.²⁹

²⁷ <https://www.annarborshelter.org/annualreport>

²⁸ The U.S. Department of Education defines homeless youth as “youth who “lack a fixed, regular, and nighttime residence” or an “individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a) a supervised or publically operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations; b) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill; or c) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.” This definition includes both youth who are unaccompanied by families and those who are homeless with their families.

²⁹ [Ypsilanti schools gear up for large homeless student population](#)
[Washtenaw County grapples with barriers to ending youth homelessness](#)

Figure 3: Ypsilanti Community Schools Student Homeless Counts, 2010-2017



Problem Statement #3: Ypsilanti’s old housing stock poses health, safety and accessibility challenges

While Ypsilanti’s old and historic homes bring character to the City, they also present challenges. Most homes were constructed before contemporary health, safety, and accessibility codes were in place (see *Fig 4*, below). As a result, Ypsilanti residents face health risks from lead paint, radon exposure, and mold; high heating bills from poor insulation; and difficulty finding housing that will accommodate a disability.

Rental households are at increased risk for all of these factors, both because they may not be provided information about the home that an owner-occupant would have, and because they lack the right to make fixes or improvements to address housing quality concerns. Additionally, the oldest housing stock is concentrated in neighborhoods that have some of the highest rental occupancy rates. City rental code inspections do not include testing for problems like exposed lead paint, hazardous mold, or radon, and do not include standards for accessibility.

Figure 4: City of Ypsilanti housing by year of construction

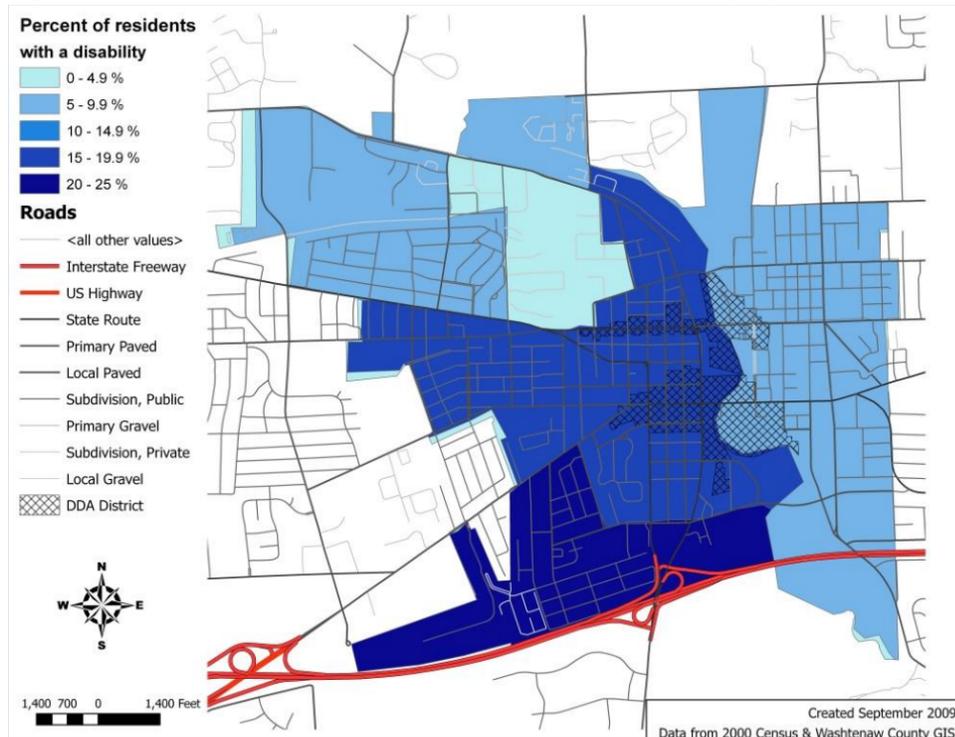


As existing housing stock ages and little new housing is added, Ypsilanti's overall housing vacancy rate continues to decline. From 2012 to 2017, the homeowner vacancy rate decreased from 4% to 1%, and the rental vacancy rate decreased from 12% to 5% during the same period. Meanwhile, the number of housing units available in the City fell from 9,118 to 8,872.

Accessibility: Only 1 in 10 houses or apartments in Ypsilanti was built in the 1990s or later³⁰, when Fair Housing Act and building code updates began requiring some accessibility standards in new housing. As a result, only a few apartment complexes offer wheelchair accessible units, and houses often require modifications to doorways, bathrooms and kitchens to serve a resident with a disability. Given the proportion of owner-occupied to rental units in the city, it is important to create accessible *and* affordable options in both categories.

³⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, "Selected Housing Characteristics"

Figure 5: Proportion of Ypsilanti residents with a disability by census tract



In addition to a general lack of accessible housing, there are few housing options adapted to the needs of seniors, many of whom live on modest fixed incomes and/or have limited physical mobility. Until 2017, Cross Street Village offered 104 housing units for seniors in Ypsilanti with incomes ranging from 20 to 40 percent of AMI. However, these units have been transitioned to market-rate housing over the past three years, resulting in a sizable loss of affordable housing for seniors (see Box 1).

Box 1:

Cross Street Village is the formerly affordable senior housing development that was incrementally converted to a market-rate complex starting in 2017. The developer of the building took advantage of a back-out clause in the agreement made to receive Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), despite the developer's initial pledge to keep it low-income senior housing for a term of 99 years. Residents of Cross Street Village demonstrated against the market-rate conversion on July 12th, 2017. Remaining low-income and disabled seniors have reported issues of negligence on the part of the owner, American Community Developers, to local and state representative's offices.

Heating and other systems: Older housing stock is typically poorly insulated and may be drafty, increasing household energy bills. This is of special concern in rental properties where tenants pay for heating but do not have the right to make energy efficiency improvements, removing the incentive for the property owner to make improvements. In some cases, the tenant does not have control of the heat, but must wait for the landlord to turn it on each year, creating discomfort and potential health problems. Other aging systems -- electrical, plumbing, HVAC, etc -- can also reduce quality of life for residents of rental properties.

Health and safety: *Lead poisoning* is a major health risk, especially for young children. 5 in 6 Ypsilanti homes are in buildings constructed before lead paint was banned for residential use in 1978. The Washtenaw County Environmental Health Department notes that over 1/3 of children (8 of 22) diagnosed with elevated lead levels in 2017 lived in Ypsilanti ZIP codes; 5 of those 8 lived in rental housing.³¹ No inventory exists of housing that has had lead risks abated by the owner, except in cases where abatement was legally required as a result of a child testing high for lead exposure.

Radon: About 40% of homes in Washtenaw County have radon above EPA recommended exposure limits³². Radon is a radioactive gas naturally occurring in soil, and risk of exposure is higher in homes that have dirt basements or crawl spaces, or have cracked foundations or basement floors--conditions common in older homes. Radon testing is easy and cheap, with test kits available for about fifteen dollars³³ from the Washtenaw County website, but there is not a legal requirement to test homes either in rental code or in for-sale units. Also, radon can change seasonally so a one-time reading is not always reliable.

Mold: High levels of household mold exposure can lead to respiratory and other health problems, and over 1 in 3 survey respondents reported having had concerns over exposure to mold in their home. However, there are no legal standards for mold detection or remediation at any level of government.

Data limitations and needs: Assessment of these challenges is difficult because of limited data; as noted, there are few legal requirements to test for or disclose many of these conditions. Survey responses show how frequently residents have experienced problems. Some of these conditions may warrant being added to the city's housing inspections or rental disclosure requirements even if there are no requirements for remediation.

Problem statement #4: Ypsilanti does not have a lot of land available to build new housing

Ypsilanti is sometimes considered "built-out"-- nearly all land in the city has already been developed, limiting the opportunity for new homes to be built. Much of the land that is currently vacant, like Water Street, is considered "brownfield," meaning past industrial activity has left behind contamination that adds cleanup costs to development. Other possible parcels have potential or actual wetlands on them.

The cost of environmental remediation and demolition, combined with the lack of available land to build on, makes adding residential density difficult. High construction costs and low supply compound the problem of finding affordable housing and building more units.^{34,35}

³¹ Email from County Health Department staff.

³² Conversation with Washtenaw County Health Department staff.

³³ Conversation with Washtenaw County Health Department staff.

³⁴ [The State of the Nation's Housing 2018](#)

³⁵ [Paying for dirt: Where have home values detached from construction costs?](#)

Most of Ypsilanti's residential areas have significant limits on what types of homes can be built, due to a combination of zoning restrictions (e.g. minimum building envelopes, setback requirements) and historic preservation requirements. Some barriers to construction of new affordable housing in Ypsilanti include: single-family residential (R-1) zoning (nearly 30% of land within the city is zoned R-1, which restricts residential density); Historic District Commission requirements; minimum parking requirements; and the existing family definition, which restricts the number of unrelated adults who may occupy the same housing unit. These barriers are discussed in greater detail under Problem Statement #5.

Since new housing is typically more expensive than existing housing -- especially in the Ann Arbor construction market, where labor costs are relatively high -- replacing older housing with new construction may exacerbate housing affordability issues.

Problem statement #5: Current and past policies contribute to our affordability and accessibility challenges (state level, local level)

Exclusionary zoning actions: Over the past 40 years, the City of Ypsilanti has used zoning changes to reduce the number of housing units in neighborhoods, explicitly working to limit multi-family housing in favor of owner-occupied single-unit properties. These actions have contributed to the loss of affordable rental apartments over time, while limiting the city's opportunity to create new housing. The current zoning ordinance also limits the potential development or conversion of smaller-scale or multi-unit housing through (1) accessory dwelling unit (ADU) restrictions (ADUs are allowed only in select zoning districts, namely CN, CN-Mid, and HC) and (2) residential lot requirements and building envelopes that effectively prevent the construction of smaller-scale homes (including tiny homes), except as an accessory use in select districts. (Some recent updates to the zoning ordinance, including the elimination of minimum parking requirements for single- and two-unit residences, are better aligned with the goal of housing affordability.)

Non-family occupancy caps: The City of Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance limits the number of unrelated adults that may constitute a "family" living in a single dwelling. The City's regulation is stricter than in surrounding communities, leading to under-utilization of available housing units.

Neighborhood Enterprise Zone: The city has designated the neighborhoods around Harriet Street as a Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ), a State of Michigan program that offers property tax abatements for new home construction or renovations. The structure of NEZ abatements adopted by the Ypsilanti City Council grants preferential treatment (in the form of longer-duration tax incentives) to new purchasers of properties, which could accelerate displacement of existing residents. Only two NEZ certificates have been issued since the inception of the NEZ around Harriet Street; both were issued to new occupants/homebuyers. In combination with the NEZ, the city offered a number of empty lots for sale at the heavily

discounted price of \$1,000,³⁶ foregoing a public asset (buildable land) that could have been invested in the creation of permanently affordable housing.

Loss of LIHTC dedicated affordable housing: The federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program offers tax credits to private real estate developers to create affordable housing. Because of how Michigan administered the state's allocation of credits in the early 2000s, the owners of several apartment complexes in Ypsilanti city and township have been able to shed their affordability requirements recently, leading to dramatic increases in rents. While the state has seemingly closed the loophole for newer LIHTC, this experience underscores the need for the City to scrutinize developers' use of state and federal programs to ensure the promised affordability is actually delivered.

C. Public input

Public engagement and representation emerged early on as key priorities for the committee. Because today's housing affordability and accessibility issues have historical roots in racist and exclusionary policies that range from redlining and racial steering to restrictive zoning and housing covenants, it is critical that people in historically marginalized groups have a voice in both the framing of the problem and the design of remedial policies and measures.

The committee designed and implemented a multi-stage public engagement process that consisted of:

- **A Housing Affordability & Accessibility Survey** to gather up-to-date information on the nature and magnitude of housing affordability and accessibility issues experienced by Ypsilanti residents. The Housing Survey, which was made available online and in hard copy at several locations throughout the City, was launched on December 5, 2018 and closed in February 2019. More than 600 responses were collected; a summary of survey results is included in **Appendix B**.
- **Key informant interviews** with three landlords of residential properties in Ypsilanti (one with a small number of rental properties, one with a moderate number of rental properties, and one with a large number of rental properties). Interviews were conducted while the Housing Survey was ongoing, and the input provided by landlords was used to paint a more complete picture of the factors that influence housing affordability and accessibility. A list of interview questions is included in **Appendix C**.
- An **Open Forum** to present the survey and interview findings to the public and to solicit public input on a preliminary set of housing affordability and accessibility strategies for the City of Ypsilanti. The forum, which was held at Riverside Arts Center on May 2, 2019, generated lively discussion on certain topics (e.g. rental inspections and quality of rental housing) as well as written and verbal feedback input on potential strategies.
- An **Ypsilanti Housing Strategies Survey** to gather quantitative feedback from Ypsilanti residents on the favorability of specific housing strategies in six key domains: (1)

³⁶ [City of Ypsilanti to sell its empty land for \\$1,000](#)

Renters' rights, (2) Sustainable development strategies, (3) Need-based assistance strategies, (4) Physical accessibility strategies, (5) Zoning strategies, and (6) Partnership and advocacy strategies. The Housing Strategies Survey was launched online on September 3, 2019 and closed on October 22, 2019. More than 360 responses were collected; a copy of the survey and a summary of its results are included in **Appendix D**.

- Finally, the committee welcomed public comment and input through its standing monthly meetings, held from January 2018 to May 2019.

Despite efforts to solicit input from a representative cross-section of Ypsilanti residents, the survey demographics indicate that some groups were underrepresented while others were overrepresented. Males, Black/African Americans, and renters were underrepresented in the survey by a significant margin.

III. Key findings:

Our major findings with respect to housing affordability are the following:

- Prices of both for-sale and rental housing are rising fast and show no signs of abating, in line with national trends.
- The most commonly used measures of housing affordability fail to capture the total cost of housing as experienced by most Ypsilanti residents, and especially those who earn the median income or less. Monthly rents do not capture the full picture with respect to the cost of rental housing; most rentals require a deposit equal to a full month's rent.
- Over half (54.6%) of Ypsilanti renters are cost-burdened with respect to housing, meaning that they spend more than 30% of their income on housing (ACS 2017). Data from the committee's Housing survey closely track data from the ACS on this point.
- Real estate investors -- some local, others from outside of the area -- who bought homes in Ypsilanti during the housing crisis in order to "flip" them have profited from increasing sales prices. Many Ypsilanti homeowners who purchased their homes at depressed prices (i.e. from 2008 to 2013) have seen their property values escalate rapidly since 2013, resulting in substantial growth in home equity.
- The flip side of these benefits to investors and newer homeowners has been a sharp decline in access to homeownership for Ypsilanti and other area residents who currently rent their homes. In addition, the boom-bust housing cycle -- by first displacing people with limited wealth and/or income from their homes through foreclosure or short sales and then making it difficult or impossible for them to afford another home in the same neighborhood -- has had a gentrifying effect that is especially visible in the southwest section of the City.
- The consequences of rising rents have been acutely felt by Ypsilanti residents, particularly those with lower incomes. Some of the disruptive effects have included frequent moves motivated by sharp rent increases; being forced to settle for poorly maintained rental units that are less accessible to public transportation and other essential amenities; displacement, especially among seniors and people with disabilities; housing insecurity; and homelessness.
- Source-of-income discrimination appears to be a problem for renters in Ypsilanti, with 9.3% of housing survey respondents indicating they have been denied housing based on their source of income.
- Protecting and advancing housing affordability and accessibility will require decisive and sustained action at multiple levels of government, including the municipal, county, state, and federal levels. Collaborating with policymakers and officials at other levels of government will be essential to ensuring that all people, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti.
- One-size-fits-all solutions do not apply; we will need a combination of strategies that are tailored to the specific housing needs and preferences of Ypsilanti residents, including young people, seniors who wish to age in place and people with disabilities.

Our major findings with respect to housing accessibility are the following:

- Overwhelmingly, Ypsilanti's housing stock is older, predating the ADA and Fair Housing Act, with only 1 in 10 houses or apartments in Ypsilanti built since 1990.³⁷ Only a small portion of units offer wheelchair accessibility, and houses often require modifications to doorways, bathrooms, and kitchens to serve a resident with a disability.³⁸
- The City of Ypsilanti 2012-2016 census statistics reported that 6.7% of persons under 65 have a disability, or about 1400 disabled persons (auditory, visual, cognitive, ambulatory impairments).³⁹
- Accessibility is not limited to the needs of wheelchair users. According to broadest definitions of disability, 32% of Ypsilanti residents are living with a disability of some type.⁴⁰ The highest concentrations of residents with a disability are in areas with the least income.
- AARP/Harvard reports that 90% of seniors plan to age in place, and SEMCOG estimates the over 65 demographic will increase in our area by 240% by 2035. Given the proportions of owner-occupied to rental units in the city, it is important to create accessible options in both categories.
- Results from our Housing Affordability & Accessibility Survey bear out these basic facts. Two-thirds of survey respondents (66.7%) reported that their homes have no accessibility features, and more than 1 in 4 reported that barriers to physical accessibility in a home had limited their quality of life.
- Beyond those experiencing a disability, many survey respondents said that accessibility is a consideration in the selection of their next residence. Over half of respondents said a ramp or step-free entrance would be a factor in their choice of a home, and more than 1 in 5 said that every accessibility option listed in the survey -- from parking, to bathroom and kitchen amenities, to doorways and elevators -- would be a desirable factor. Furthermore, there was broad support for an Affordability & Accessibility Ordinance.

³⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, "Selected Housing Characteristics"

³⁸ While there are several of these facilities that offer these amenities, they often have limited availability. Namely, Cross Street Village, River Rain Apartments, 422 Pearl, 420 Emmet, 404 N Huron, Peninsular Place, UGA Townhomes, and recently renovated Ypsilanti Housing Authority units.

³⁹ Those numbers exclude seniors and use a definition of disability ("Serious difficulty with four basic areas of function -- hearing, vision, ambulation, cognition") that could be expected to underestimate numbers determined by other methods

⁴⁰ The Fair Housing Act defines a person with a disability as an individual for whom a physical or mental impairment limits one or more major life activities. This

IV. Committee recommendations:

In our work as a committee, we emphasized the lived experience and observations of residents of Ypsilanti as forms of expertise that are central to understanding and addressing the complex problems of housing affordability and accessibility. Our recommendations were generated in large part through the aggregation of community expertise sought through public engagement and inquiry.

Based on input and feedback from 361 respondents who reviewed the 26 proposed housing strategies included in the committee’s Housing Strategies survey, our committee recommends that the City review and seek to implement 11 proposals. The selected proposals reflect the input of Ypsilanti residents who engaged with this survey and are consistent with the committee’s analysis of strategies that, if implemented, will respond to pressing housing needs and start to correct historical inequities in Ypsilanti.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and civil unrest due to systemic racial inequities, we share a conviction that it is more important than ever for local governments to proactively address the needs and interests of historically marginalized communities. With a view to accelerating action, we offer a prospective pathway and timeline for rolling out housing policies.

The recommended proposals are preferred across demographics with a notable difference between renters and homeowners; on a scale of 1 to 5, renters assigned almost all proposals a higher score (an average of ~4.4 compared to an average score of ~3.6 given by homeowners, as detailed in Table 3).

Table 3: Renter vs. homeowner ratings of housing strategy proposals

Proposal	Avg. score, renters (n=126)	Avg. score, homeowners (n=220)	Difference
Protect renters from improper eviction	4.54	3.33	Renters +36%
Give renters with criminal records a fair chance	4.15	3.35	Renters +24%
Give tenants first opportunity to purchase property from owner	4.52	3.78	Renters +20%
Build on public land	4.44	3.54	Renters +25%
Establish a community land trust	4.29	3.29	Renters +30%
Enact an inclusionary housing ordinance	4.66	3.42	Renters +36%
Enact an affordability & accessibility ordinance	4.75	3.60	Renters +32%
Incentivize co-op conversions	4.37	3.56	Renters +23%
Build a homeless shelter in Ypsilanti	4.57	3.66	Renters +25%
Install public toilets and benches in our parks	4.41	3.68	Renters +20%
Establish a Minor Home Repair Program	4.60	4.11	Renters +12%
Fund local agencies that provide need-based assistance	4.67	3.88	Renters +21%
Allow existing homeowners living South of Michigan Ave to qualify for the same tax breaks as new home-buyers	4.40	3.95	Renters +11%
Create a landlord incentive program to stabilize rent	4.46	3.58	Renters +25%
Assist low-income residents with home-buying	4.61	3.80	Renters +21%
Adopt a Visitability Ordinance	4.38	3.34	Renters +31%

Launch a Universal Design Program	4.23	3.48	Renters +22%
Change single family zoning districts to include multiple family dwellings	4.35	3.08	Renters +41%
Lift the limit on non-related persons living in a single dwelling	4.41	3.42	Renters +29%
Increase housing stock by allowing Accessory Dwelling Units	4.37	3.89	Renters +12%
Increase housing stock by accommodating tiny homes	4.39	3.99	Renters +10%
Change parking space requirement for new housing developments	3.73	3.22	Renters +16%
Advocate for rent control	4.54	3.37	Renters +35%
Ask local universities to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust	4.63	4.19	Renters +11%
Ask the Office for Community and Economic Development (OCED) of Washtenaw for funding toward housing in Ypsilanti	4.57	3.99	Renters +15%
Advocate for the authority to regulate Airbnb (and other short-term rentals)	3.91	3.39	Renters +15%
All proposals pertaining to renters' rights or sustainable development strategies	4.42	3.61	Renters +19%

A. Priority Recommendations

Our committee recommends adoption of the following proposals, organized by category:

Renter's Rights: These are recommendations that the City of Ypsilanti could implement to expand renters' rights and protect them from discrimination.

1) Tenant Right of First Refusal

Proposal: Give tenants first opportunity to purchase properties from the property owner by enacting a 'Tenant Right of First Refusal' ordinance. The ordinance would grant tenants both advance notice of a planned sale and a specified time period within which to purchase a property, should the owner wish to sell it.

Tenant Right of First Refusal can set in motion a process that leads to the successful transfer of ownership—either to the residents or to another entity willing to preserve the long-term affordability of the property. It has been successful in producing a number of resident-owned properties and partnerships among residents and nonprofits in Washington, DC and other cities.

2) Just Cause Ordinance

Proposal: Protect renters from improper eviction by enacting a 'Just Cause' ordinance to protect renters from eviction and displacement for improper reasons.

The Michigan Act of 1933 Just Cause Eviction statutes protect tenants from wrongful and/or retaliatory eviction. They limit a landlord's ability to evict tenants to specific reasons, such as failure to pay rent or for violation of the lease terms. A city Just Cause

Ordinance could extend the protections of Michigan Act 1933 to lease renewals, and bar rental property owners from refusing to renew a tenant's lease without 'just cause'.

Sustainable Development: These are recommendations that the City of Ypsilanti could implement to prioritize the sustainable development of affordable and accessible housing, as well as to provide safe shelter to all residents.

3) **Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance**

Proposal: Enact an Affordability & Accessibility Ordinance that (1) defines the parameters for affordable and accessible housing based on Ypsilanti's median income rather than countywide median income and (2) requires new housing developments that receive public funding or tax subsidies to include a percentage of affordable and accessible units in line with Ypsilanti's need.

Enacting an Affordability Ordinance would help set the stage for future adoption of an inclusionary housing policy by tying affordability thresholds to Ypsilanti's median income rather than the median income of Washtenaw County as a whole. This would help ensure that affordable housing subsidies and resources in Ypsilanti are adapted to local conditions and directed to those who need them most.

Disabled residents in Ypsilanti are predominantly low-income and many live in older units within the City. An Accessibility Ordinance based on these figures would take the needs of disabled residents into account when determining new construction and rehabilitation requirements.

4) **Homeless Shelter**

Proposal: Build or establish an overnight shelter in Ypsilanti to help meet needs of residents experiencing homelessness.

Ozone House's newly constructed 26-bed youth shelter on North Huron River Drive is now serving homeless youth, but Ypsilanti does not have an overnight shelter for adults and families experiencing homelessness. Adding a shelter for adults and families would help ensure that everyone has access to a safe place to stay in times of acute need.

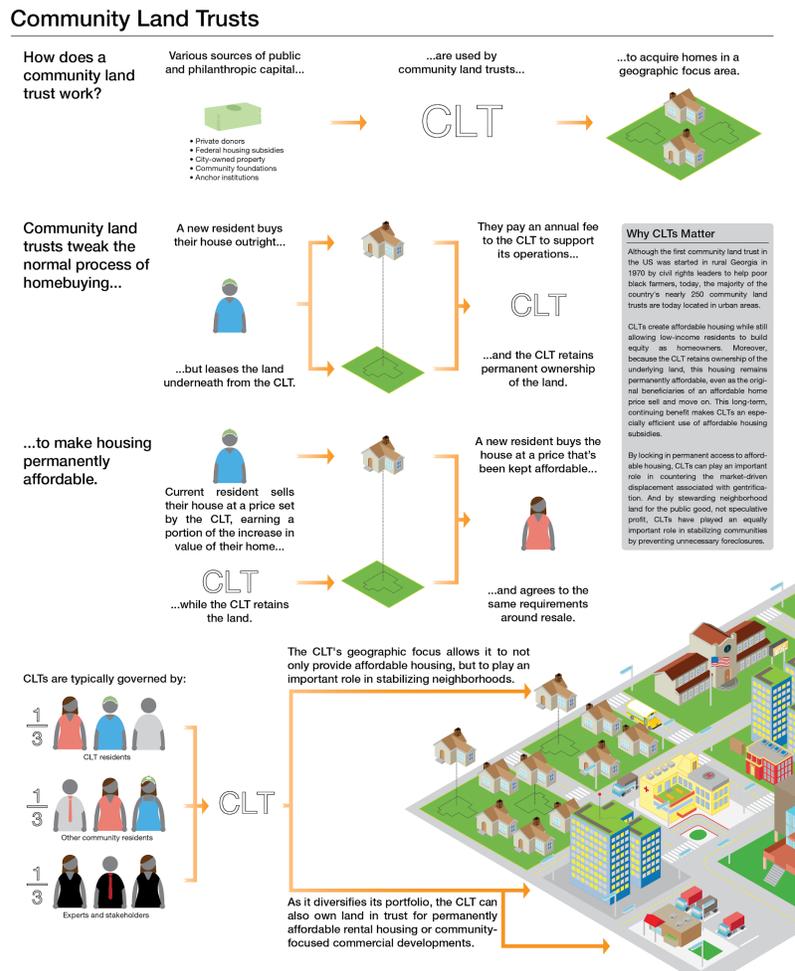
5) **Community Land Trust**

Proposal: Establish a Community Land Trust (CLT) to promote long-term housing affordability and accessibility through community control of land.

Community Land Trusts are nonprofit, community-based organizations designed to ensure community stewardship of land. They combine democratic ownership of land with private ownership of structures on the land. Most CLTs limit the rate at which the structures they manage can appreciate each year, so that the affordability of those

structures is preserved over time. CLTs can be interspersed throughout one or more neighborhoods, and can include businesses and single- and multi-family homes.

There are multiple ways of funding and running a CLT. The City of Ypsilanti could provide financial incentives for the formation of independent, neighborhood-based CLTs in core neighborhoods and center districts. It could also advocate with Washtenaw County and the City of Ann Arbor for the establishment of a countywide, publicly funded CLT like the one in Orange County, North Carolina. The infographic below from the Democracy Collaborative describes the basic attributes of a CLT.



Need-based assistance: These are recommendations that the City of Ypsilanti could implement to support low-income residents' home improvement and housing stability.

6) Assist low-income residents with home-buying

Proposal: Assist low-income residents who wish to purchase a home by offering credit improvement services, and mortgage down-payment assistance.

Seven in ten households in Ypsilanti are (predominantly low-income) renter households—a significantly higher percentage to comparable college towns of its size. The city could provide assistance to low-income households who wish to buy homes, to reduce barriers to homeownership and promote housing stability.

7) **Minor home repair**

Proposal: Establish a Minor Home Repair Program to assist with the cost of essential home repairs for eligible low-income and disabled homeowners. Eligible repairs could include roof replacement, plumbing replacement, mechanical or electrical replacements, ADA ramp installation or repair, door modifications, and lead or mold remediation.

Cities in the State of Michigan can choose to offer small grants for home improvements. For example, the City of Battle Creek has a Minor Home Repair Program that provides eligible low-income homeowners with up to one-half of the cost of roof replacement, or other exterior code compliance or health and safety issues.

Accessibility: In addition to enacting an Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance as recommended above, the City of Ypsilanti could enact a Visitability Ordinance to expand physical accessibility of housing and public life in Ypsilanti.

8) **Visitability ordinance**

Proposal: Adopt a Visitability Ordinance to ensure that newly constructed homes incorporate basic accessibility features that make it easier for mobility-impaired people to visit or live in Ypsilanti.

A home can be considered “visitable” if it has: (1) at least one no-step entrance; (2) doors with 32 inches of clear passage space; and (3) a bathroom on the main floor that is wheelchair-accessible. Some US cities have adopted mandatory visitability ordinances for all newly built homes; others have adopted visitability ordinances for houses built with public funding or tax incentives.

Zoning: These are zoning recommendations that the City of Ypsilanti could implement to expand density and housing affordability through land use policy.

9) **Lift the limit on non-related adults per dwelling**

Proposal: Increase the number of unrelated individuals who may reside together in a dwelling by changing the Zoning Ordinance definition of Family to include a limit of two unrelated persons for each bedroom in the dwelling.

The current City of Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance definition of a “family” limits the number of unrelated individuals that may occupy a single-family home as follows: “A group of

persons, none of whom are related to each other by blood, marriage, or adoption, who reside together in a single dwelling unit, provided that the total number of occupants in such group shall not exceed three, except in the MD district and in any permitted residential uses in any corridor district the total number of occupants in this group shall not exceed four, unless otherwise provided for in this chapter; or". This section may be updated to "A group of persons, none of whom are related to each other by blood, marriage, or adoption, who reside together in a single dwelling unit, provided that the total number of occupants in such group shall not exceed two for each bedroom in the dwelling; or"

Advocacy and partnership: These are proposals that the City of Ypsilanti could advocate for on the state, county, and local level to expand and sustain housing affordability in Ypsilanti and beyond, through partnership and/or legislative change.

10) Rent Control

Proposal: Advocate with state lawmakers to grant municipalities the authority to cap annual rent increases.

Michigan law currently prohibits local government units from enacting or enforcing rent control policies. Two bills introduced in 2017 (House Bills 4686 and 4687) would (1) revise the law to create an exception to the rent control prohibition and (2) give local governments the power to prevent landlords from charging tenants that have a disability or elderly tenants more than 50 percent of their income in rent. Another approach to capping rent increases would be to allow rents to appreciate by a fixed percentage each year; for example, Oregon recently passed a statewide rent control bill that caps annual rent increases at inflation plus 7 percent.

11) Ask Universities to invest in Ypsilanti's Housing Trust Fund

Proposal: Advocate for the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund and to actively support other county-wide housing affordability measures.

Many reports, including the 2014 OCED housing report, point to Ann Arbor's increasing rental rates driving the displacement of Ann Arbor residents to Ypsilanti. Asking universities and other large employers to fund the Ypsilanti Housing Trust would offer these entities the opportunity to address the harms of displacement and support housing equity in Ypsilanti.

Table 4 (below) provides a visual overview of alignment between the above recommendations and the five problem statements introduced in **section II.B** of this report.

Table 4: Cross-mapping of recommendations and problem statements

	The cost of housing is increasing quickly.	Existing data and measures do not adequately capture the local situation with respect to housing affordability and accessibility.	Ypsilanti's old housing stock poses health, safety, and accessibility challenges.	Ypsilanti does not have a lot of land available to build new housing.	Current and past policies contribute to our affordability and accessibility challenges (state level, local level).
Tenant Right of First Refusal	✓	✓		✓	✓
Just Cause	✓	✓			✓
Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Homeless Shelter		✓			✓
Community Land Trust	✓	✓		✓	✓
Assist low-income residents with home-buying	✓	✓	✓		✓
Minor home repair		✓	✓	✓	✓
Visitability ordinance		✓	✓	✓	✓
Lift the limit on non-related adults	✓	✓		✓	✓
Rent Control	✓	✓		✓	✓
Ask Universities to invest in Housing Trust Fund	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

B. Proposed pathway and timeline for implementation

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and civil unrest due to systemic racial inequities, we share a conviction that it is more urgent than ever for local governments to proactively address the needs and interests of communities under duress. With a view to accelerating action, we

offer a prospective three-phase pathway and timeline for rolling out housing policies and programs over the next 10 years.

Phase One (current Budget year)

Make the Ypsilanti Housing Trust permanent: Assure a sustainable funding source for housing affordability and accessibility by formalizing and making permanent the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund started by Councilmember Pete Murdock and nourishing it with an annual contribution of no less than \$100,000 from the City's general fund.

Allocate staff time to housing affordability and accessibility: Allocate a significant portion of an existing staff member's time to the coordination and monitoring of City housing affordability and accessibility policy and to liaising with other units of government and partners on housing affordability and accessibility.

Draft and implement the Tenant Right of First Refusal ordinance (Strategy 1), the Just Cause Ordinance (Strategy 2), the Affordability and Accessibility Ordinance (Strategy 3), the Visitability Ordinance (Strategy 8), and the Zoning Ordinance text amendment to increase the number of non-related adults who may occupy a single dwelling (Strategy 9) from three total to two persons per bedroom.

Conduct a public outreach campaign to raise awareness about tenant rights and protections in the City. Property managers and tenants should be educated about the Tenant's rights brochure/handbook requirement implemented in 2018, as well as their protection from source-of-income discrimination (including housing vouchers and student loans) and protections around criminal history as stipulated in Ypsilanti's Non-Discrimination Ordinance. Finally, the campaign presents an opportunity to notify tenants and property managers about the resources available to them -- at the local, county, and state levels -- for home repair,

Begin advocating for State legislation to expand local authority to regulate rent increases (Strategy 10) and for local university contributions to the City of Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund (Strategy 11).

Finally, while we have not included broader rezoning actions in our official recommendations, we would nonetheless encourage the Planning Commission to **consider additional changes to the Zoning Ordinance** to reduce restrictions on construction and/or conversion of multi-unit homes, accessory dwelling units, and smaller-scale homes.

Rationale: The recommendations for Budget Year 2020 face relatively few barriers to implementation, as they modify existing codes or ordinances. The Just Cause ordinance and zoning text amendment to increase the limit on non-related adults could immediately increase housing security for residents at risk of eviction and/or discriminatory action. The Tenant Right of First Refusal ordinance would help slow or stem another rapid transfer of homes to speculative investors in the case of an economic slowdown or crisis. The Visitability and

Affordability and Accessibility Ordinances are recommended with a view to ensuring that future development is adapted to local needs and conditions. Advocating for and/or implementing a rent control ordinance at the city level (that would remain non-enforceable until State legislation changes) is a means of signaling that the City of Ypsilanti has interest in changing State restrictions on rent control. Securing annual funding commitments from local universities for the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund would be an important step towards acknowledging and making amends for those institutions' outside role in driving up housing costs and housing inequity in the area, including by enrolling large numbers of students without capacity -- or a viable plan -- to house them.

Phase Two (Budget year 2021)

Allocate \$100,000 from the 2021-2022 budget to the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund. As communities across the U.S. re-evaluate their budget priorities in light of the nationwide critique of police brutality and police-related public expenditures, we encourage the City of Ypsilanti to prioritize housing affordability through a standing annual contribution of \$100,000 to the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund. These funds could be reallocated from the Ypsilanti Police Department budget (which currently accounts for 24% of the total City budget) or from the funds that were set aside for the construction of a train platform. Reorienting funding to housing and other essential services would provide for both a progressive financial policy change and material change toward public safety.

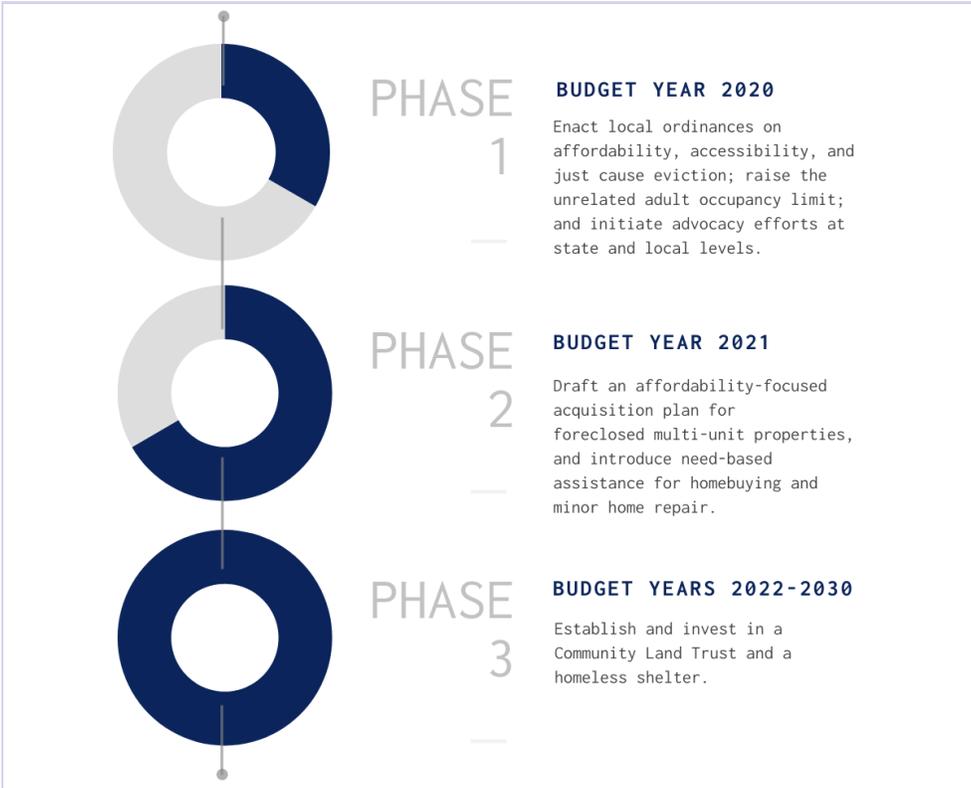
Create a diversified funding strategy for the Ypsilanti Housing Trust Fund. We recommend that the City create a sustainable funding plan incorporating diversified funding sources. These could include contributions from the University of Michigan, Michigan Medicine, and EMU; Ann Arbor-based businesses with large shares of employees who reside in Ypsilanti; the American Center for Mobility (assuming future growth of its operations and local employment rolls); owners of short-term rental properties in Ypsilanti; and real estate investors with ownership of 100 or more housing units in Ypsilanti.

Draft an affordability-focused property acquisition plan that would go into effect in the event of another housing crisis resulting in a surge of foreclosures of multi-unit residences. The aim of this plan would be to ensure that such properties can be converted to sustainable affordable and accessible use, either in partnership with a local housing non-profit or through the launch of a Community Land Trust.

Introduce a home-buying assistance program (Strategy 6) and the Minor home repair program (Strategy 7).

Phase Three (Budget year 2022-2030)

Create and invest in institutions that promote community stability and build toward long range sustainable housing goals.⁴¹ Pursue affordability and accessibility-focused collaborations at the county and regional levels, with a view to leveraging resources from outside of the City of Ypsilanti. These would include the establishment of a Community Land Trust (Strategy 5) and the construction or establishment of an overnight homeless shelter (Strategy 4).



C. Gaps and Limitations:

Representation: Despite efforts to solicit input from a representative cross-section of Ypsilanti residents, the survey demographics indicate that some groups were underrepresented while others were overrepresented. Males, Black/African Americans, and renters were underrepresented in the survey by a significant margin. This could be suggestive of a general underrepresentation of these groups in City government, non-profits, and other entities that were represented on our committee, and we encourage the City to monitor and prioritize representation in all housing-related actions that it undertakes.

Short-term rentals: The short-term rental market in Ypsilanti poses a potential threat to future housing affordability, since it reduces the supply of long-term rental housing. Our report stops

⁴¹ [Trickle Up Housing: Filtering Does Go Both Ways](#)

short of making recommendations vis-a-vis short-term rental properties. However, preserving local government authority to regulate short-term rental uses under State law is an essential priority in the short term, as it will provide the City with better options if and when the number of short-term rentals grows.

Senior housing: While seniors who own their homes in Ypsilanti would benefit from our recommendations for need-based assistance programs, our report does not adequately address the need for affordable senior housing. One way in which the City could respond more fully to the housing needs of seniors would be through the establishment of a Community Land Trust and the designation of some housing within that Trust as senior housing.

Appendix A: Housing affordability and accessibility committee charter

COMMITTEE CHARTER: Citizen Committee on Housing Affordability & Accessibility

Adopted December 20, 2017

Background

In October 2013, the Planning Commission of the City of Ypsilanti adopted a new Master Plan (also referred to as the “Shape Ypsi” Master Plan), a hybrid land use/policy plan intended to guide development, redevelopment and preservation in the City over a 20-year horizon. It provides the framework on which the City’s Zoning Ordinance is based and also contains guidance for other areas of civic governance, such as capital improvements, non-motorized transportation and development of publicly-owned land.

Two of the guiding values set forth in the Master Plan are “Diversity is our strength” and “Anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti.”

In the four-plus years since the 2013 Master Plan was adopted, issues of housing affordability and accessibility have surfaced repeatedly during Planning Commission proceedings (which include reviews of site plans and special use applications). Rents are rising, in some cases so sharply that renters have been priced out of the City. Barriers to physical accessibility, common among Ypsilanti’s older homes, continue to limit housing options for people with a disability.

These realities conflict with the Master Plan guiding values cited above.

By statute, the Planning Commission is required to review the Master Plan at least once every five years and to make updates as deemed necessary.

I. Purpose

The Citizen Committee will review and update the City of Ypsilanti’s 2013 Master Plan with a focus on preserving and enhancing housing affordability and accessibility in keeping with the guiding values of the Master Plan. The Committee will develop and issue recommendations for specific land use and policy changes for consideration by the Planning Commission and (upon invitation) City Council.

II. Committee Type

Per Planning Commission bylaws, “the Commission, Chair or City Planner may establish and appoint citizen committees with the consent of the Commission. The purpose of the citizen committee is to be able to use individuals who are knowledgeable or expert in a particular issue before the Commission or to better represent various interest groups.”

The Citizen committee is a “special” committee of the Planning Commission (as opposed to a standing committee). It is formed to serve for a limited time and will be dissolved once the tasks and responsibilities assigned to it are complete.

III. Membership

The committee will be comprised of:

Up to four (4) members of the Planning Commission

One member of the Human Relations Commission

One member of the Sustainability Commission

One member of the Ypsilanti Housing Commission board
One representative of EMU
One representative of Defend Affordable Ypsi
One representative of Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living
One representative of Avalon Housing
One representative of civic affairs organization at the county or state level
One Ypsilanti owner-occupant
One Ypsilanti business owner (and employer)
One lessor of rental properties in Ypsilanti
Up to two members of the community at large

All members will be residents of the City. A guiding principle in recruiting and selecting individuals to serve on the committee will be the degree to which the members, as a whole, represent the diversity of the Ypsilanti community, both demographically (in terms of income, race or ethnicity, age group and ward) and with respect to affordability and accessibility-related interests.

Organizations represented on the committee may elect to rotate their representative as appropriate to accommodate the thematic focus of work sessions. Participation is voluntary, and any organization may opt out of committee participation at any time.

All members shall have equal voice and standing with respect to the proceedings and recommendations of the Committee.

The Planning Department of the City of Ypsilanti will provide a staff advisor to the Committee.

IV. Chairperson

The Chair of the Planning Commission shall serve as the Chairperson of the Citizen Committee and will designate another committee member to chair work sessions in her absence.

V. Activities, Duties & Responsibilities

- Drawing on the most up-to-date quantitative and qualitative data and resources available, assess the current situation with respect to housing affordability and accessibility in Ypsilanti and Washtenaw County
- Analyze underlying barriers to affordability and accessibility at the municipal, county, state and national levels
- Study existing affordability and accessibility strategies and models (local and non-local)
- Identify additional strategies and models for increasing affordability and accessibility
- Rate strategies based on their probable impact, feasibility and acceptability in Ypsilanti
- Develop written land use and policy recommendations for adoption and implementation
- Present recommendations to Planning Commission and (upon invitation) City Council

Appendix B: Housing Affordability & Accessibility Survey Questions & Results

Housing Affordability & Accessibility Survey Results

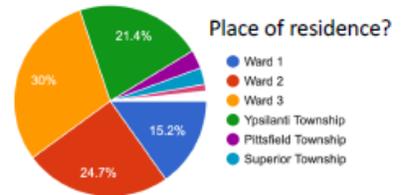
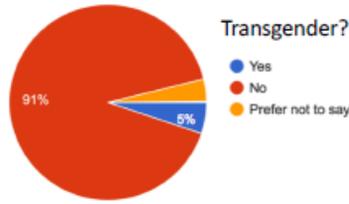
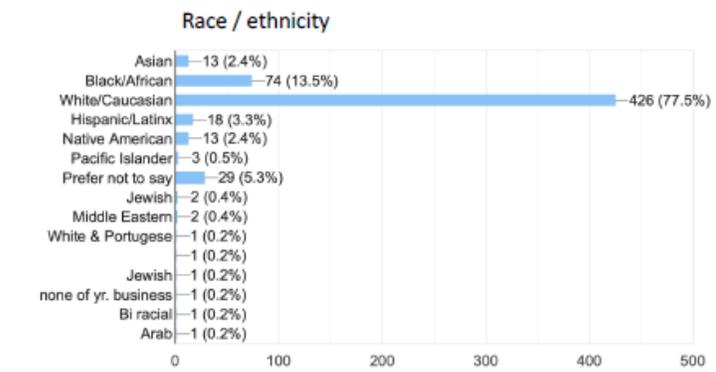
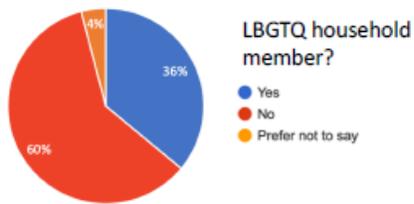
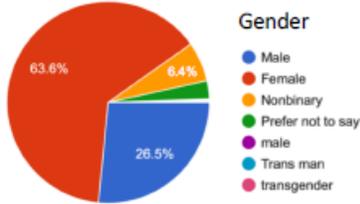
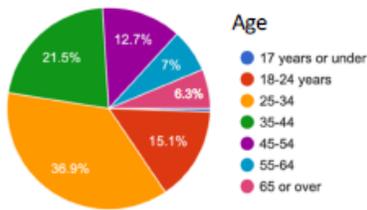
October 2018 – January 2019
City of Ypsilanti

The survey was published online (via Google Forms) and made available in hard copy at several locations throughout the City of Ypsilanti. Of 604 total responses received, more than 500 were submitted online.

Limitations: Because non-probability sampling was used, we were unable to calculate confidence intervals and margins of error. In addition, several groups were underrepresented or overrepresented in the survey, compared to their relative size as reported by the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS). See comparisons below.

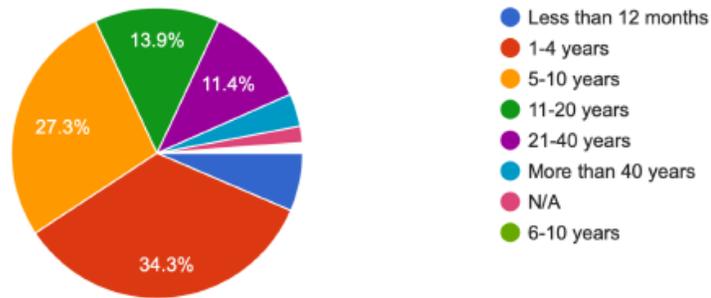
Underrepresented (Survey vs. ACS)
Black/African American (13.5% vs. 30.3%)
Male (25.4% vs. 52.6%)
Under 18 years (7% vs. 13.6%)
18-24 years (15.1% vs 25.1% age 20-24)
Hispanic (3.3% vs 4.5%)
Asian (2.4% vs. 3.5%)

Overrepresented (Survey vs. ACS)
White/Caucasian (77.5% vs. 66.9%)
Female (63.6% vs. 47.4%)
25-34 years (39.9% vs 18.2%)
35-44 years (21.5% vs 7.8%)
45-54 years (12.7% vs. 7.3%)



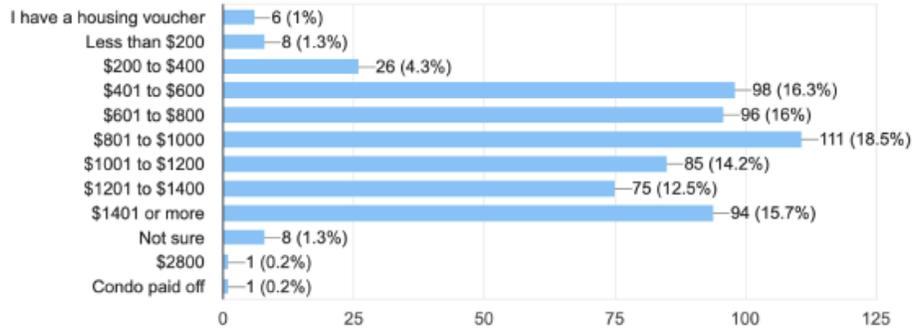
How long have you lived in the City of Ypsilanti?

604 responses



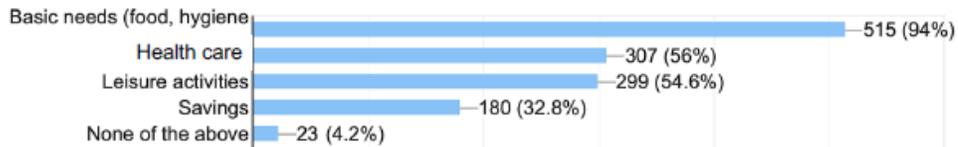
On average, how much do you spend on housing-related costs each month?

600 responses



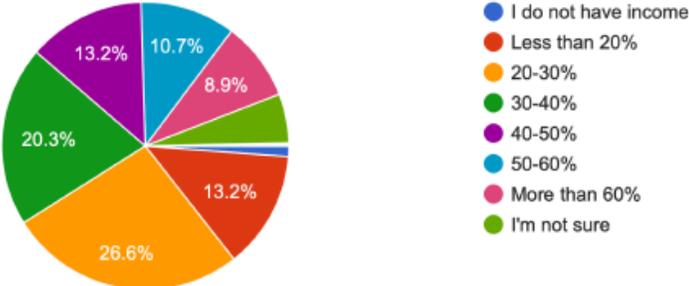
After paying your monthly housing costs, which of the following are you able to afford:

548 responses



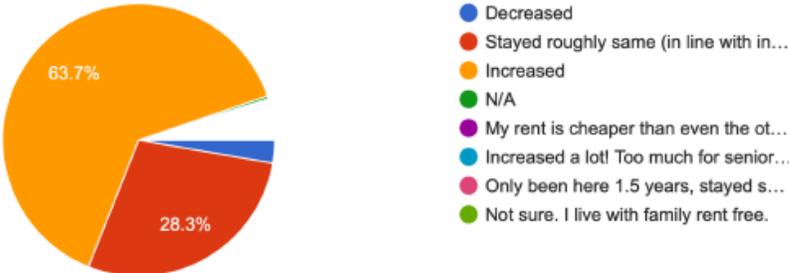
Approximately what share of your gross (pre-tax) monthly income do you spend on the above housing-related costs?

597 responses



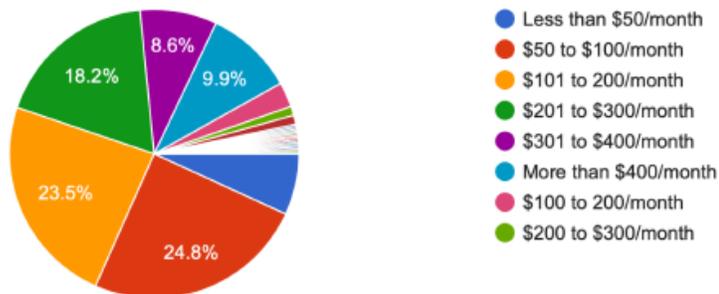
Over the past 4 to 5 years (since 2014), would you say your housing costs in the City of Ypsilanti have:

590 responses

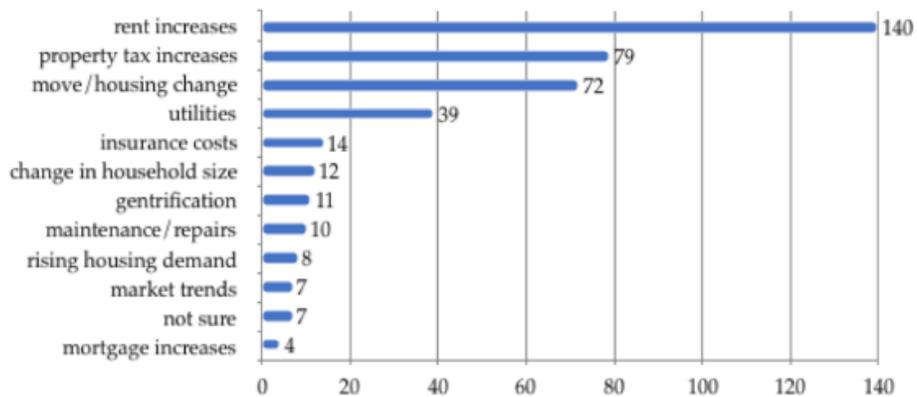


By how much have your monthly housing costs changed since 2014?

395 responses

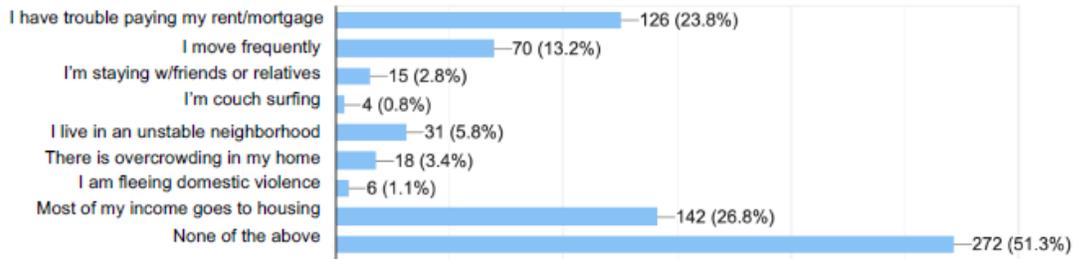


What caused the change in your housing costs since 2014?



Do any of the following describe your current or most recent housing situation? (select all that apply)

530 responses



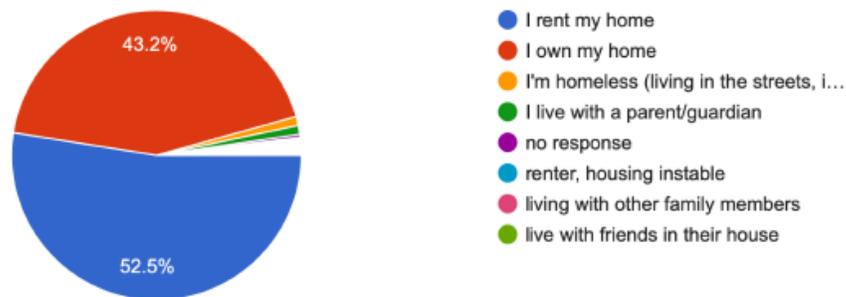
Which of the following best describes your current or most recent home in the City of Ypsilanti?

602 responses



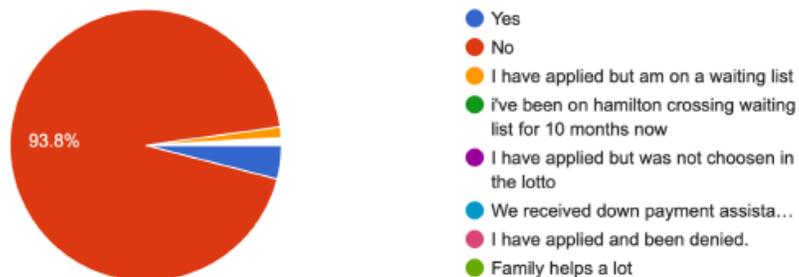
Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?

604 responses



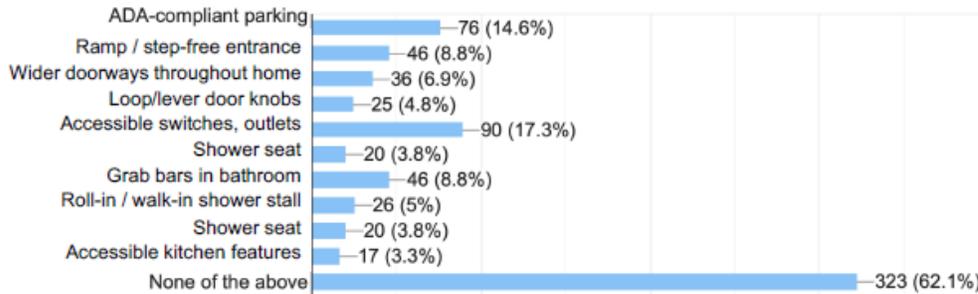
Do you currently receive housing assistance (such as housing choice vouchers or subsidized housing) through federal, state or local government?

551 responses



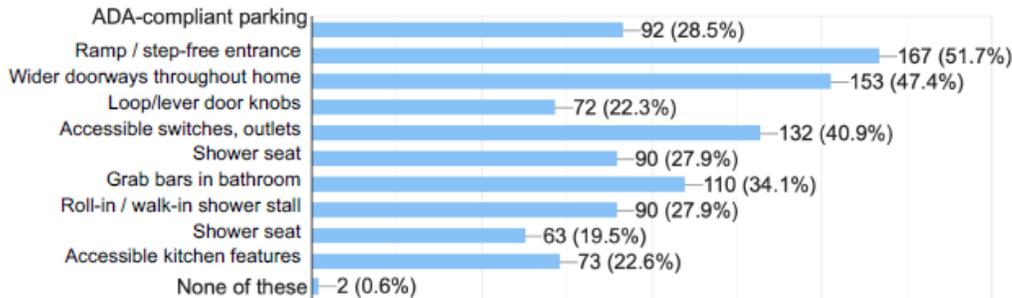
Which of the following features does your current or most recent home have to make it accessible to people with a disability?

520 responses



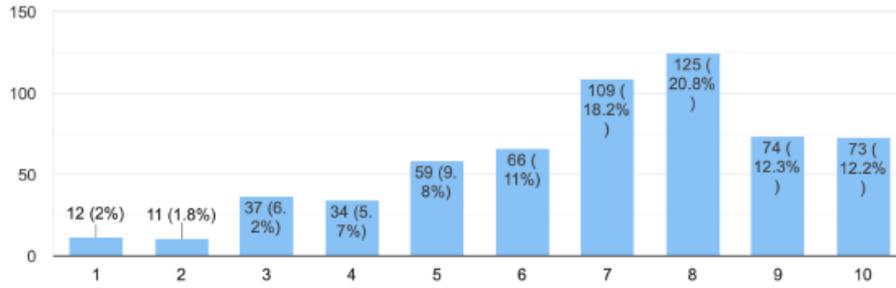
Which physical accessibility features will you take into consideration in choosing your next home (whether for yourself and friends who visit you at home)?

323 responses

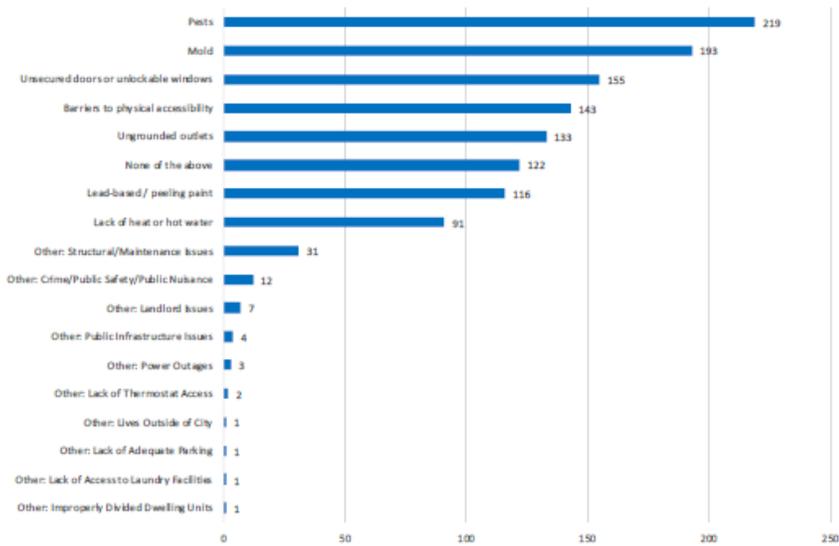


On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your current housing situation?

600 responses

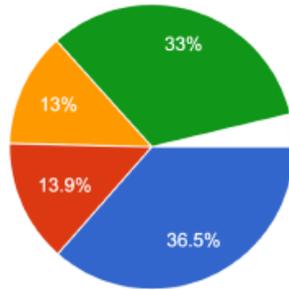


Which housing quality issues have you experienced in the City of Ypsilanti?



Would you feel comfortable asking your current landlord or housing provider to correct a quality-of-life issue (e.g. pests, physical access issues)?

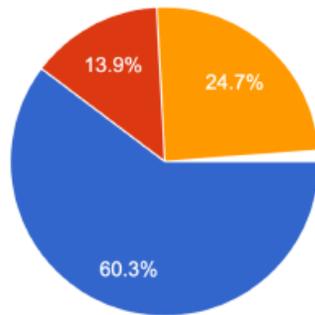
540 responses



- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- N/A
- depends on landlord temperament
- Some landlords are very unhelpful (...)
- ABSOLUTELY NOT. i learned the h...
- Only when I knew I wasn't going to...

Would you like to live in the City of Ypsilanti 3 to 5 years from now?

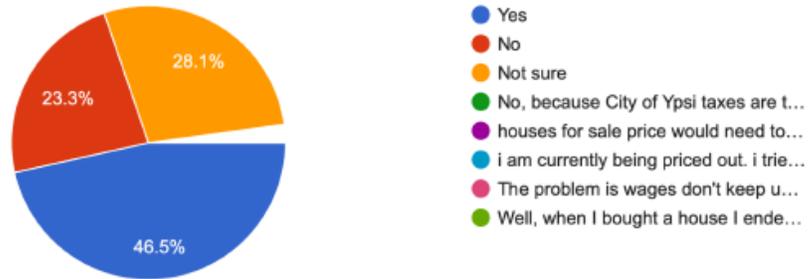
604 responses



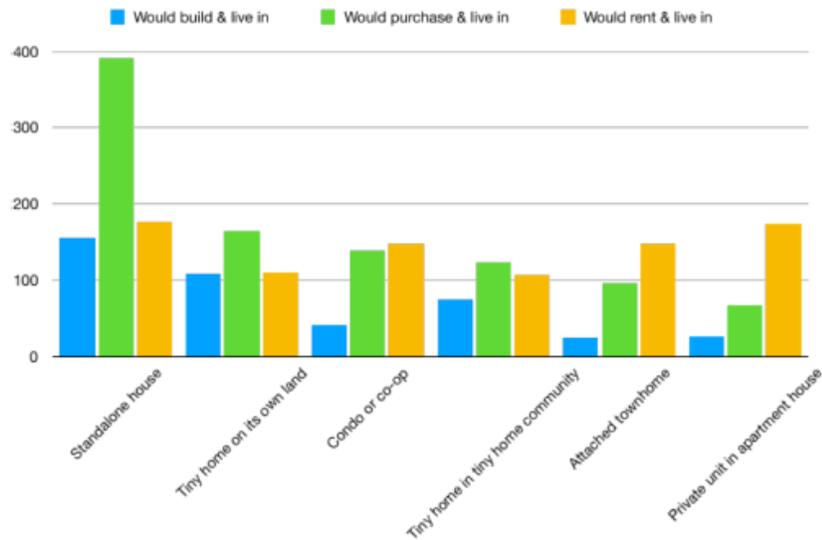
- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- if I could afford it, but probably will n...
- I would prefer Ann Arbor but Ypsila...
- Can't with the taxes
- If I stay I plan to buy a house, if not...
- I would love to stay in Ypsilanti, but...

If the cost of housing remains as it is today, do you see yourself living in the City of Ypsilanti 3 to 5 years from now?

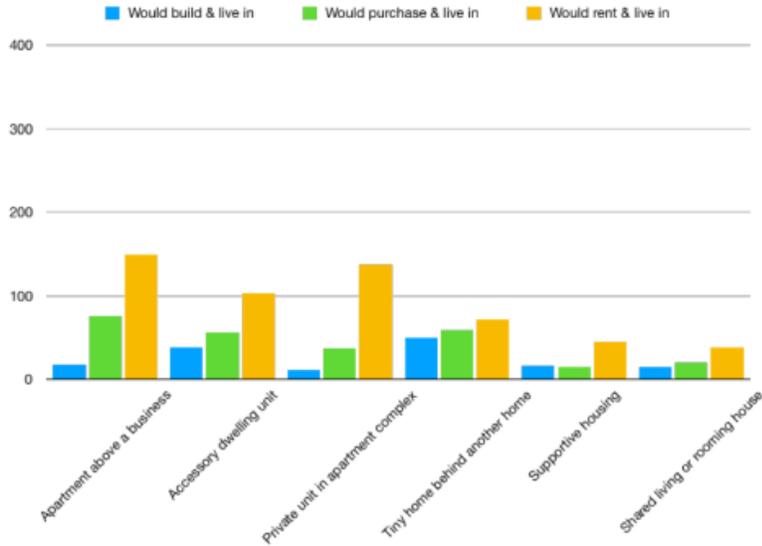
602 responses



If they were available in Ypsilanti, which types of homes would you consider living in in the next 3-5 years?

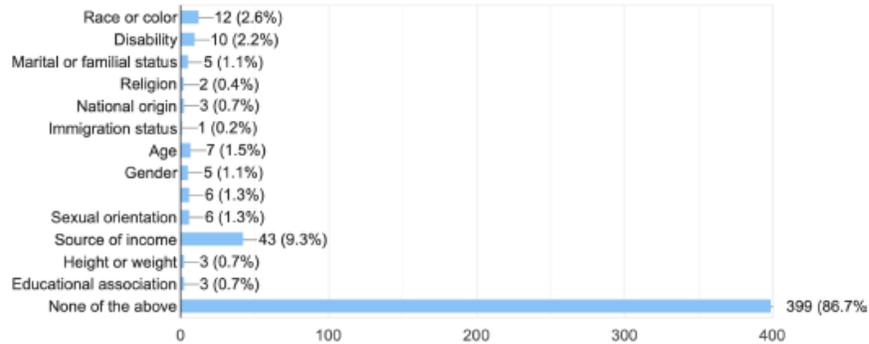


If they were available in Ypsilanti, which types of homes would you consider living in in the next 3-5 years?



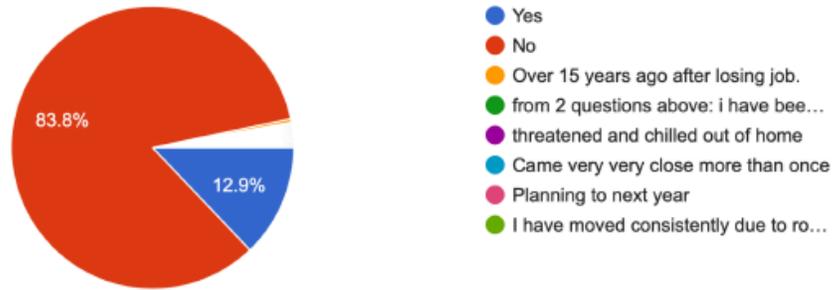
Have you ever have been denied housing or evicted from housing due to any of the following in the City of Ypsilanti:

460 responses



Have you ever been evicted or have you ever moved to avoid eviction due to rent increases you could not afford to pay?

520 responses



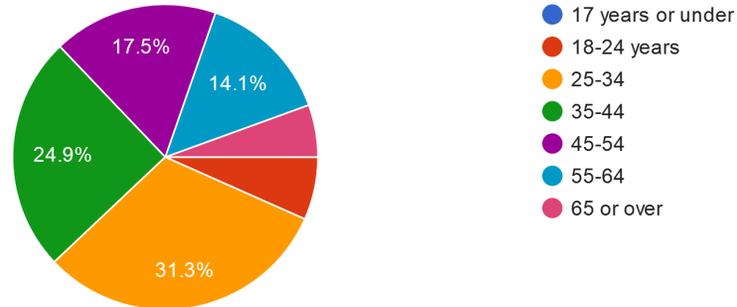
Appendix C: Landlord Interview Questions

1. Number of units owned/managed?
2. Rent range of units by bedroom size?
3. Types of units rented (size and type – townhouse, apartment, duplex, single family home)?
4. Do any of your units have any accessibility features, such as no-step entry, wide doors, roll-in showers, grab bars or ramps? Do you have a formal process for addressing these types of requests?
5. Why change rents? How often? On a set schedule?
6. What do you take into consideration when setting rent prices? (utilities?)
7. Do you allow renters with felony convictions? Why or why not? Experience?
8. What types of units are most in demand? In what size units do you experience the greatest vacancy?
9. Do you accept housing subsidies, such as Section 8? Why or why not? Experience?
10. How many eviction filings and actual evictions do you have in a typical year? What's the primary cause?
11. What's your turnover rate? What percentages of tenants renew leases?
12. Do you have a formal process for addressing tenant maintenance and emergency concerns?
13. Is there anything the city could do to facilitate adding accessibility features?

Appendix D: Housing Strategies Survey Questions & Results

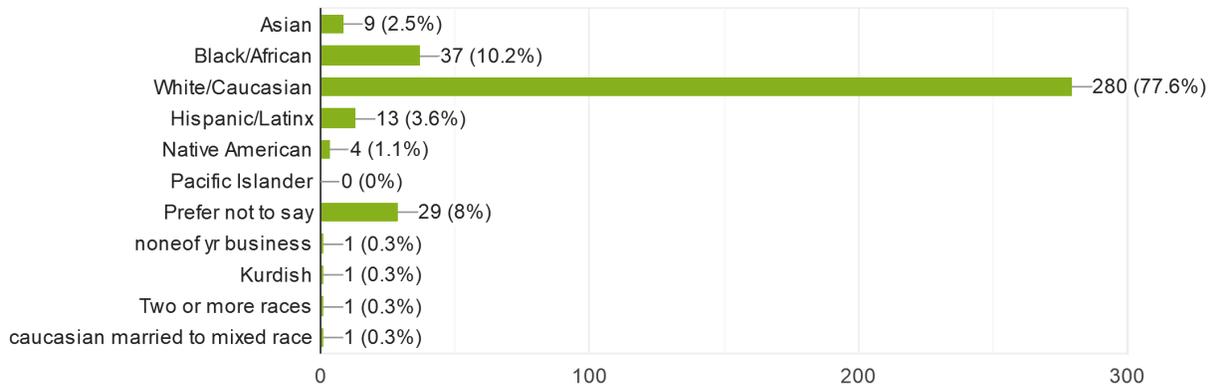
Which age group best describes you?

361 responses



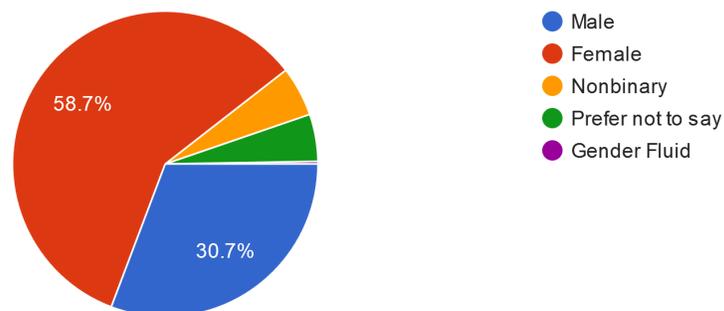
Which of the following races/ethnicities do you identify as (select all that apply)?

361 responses



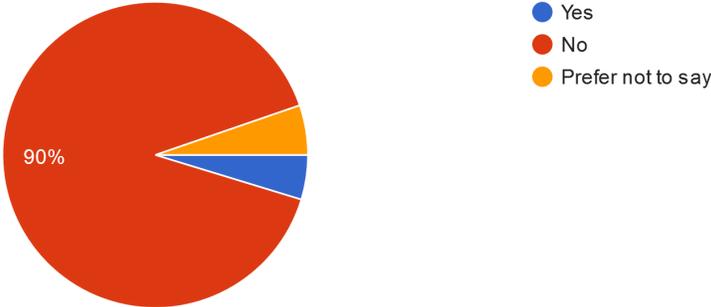
Gender:

361 responses



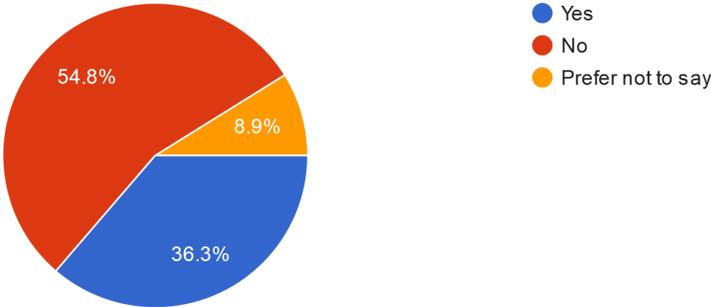
Do you identify as transgender?

361 responses



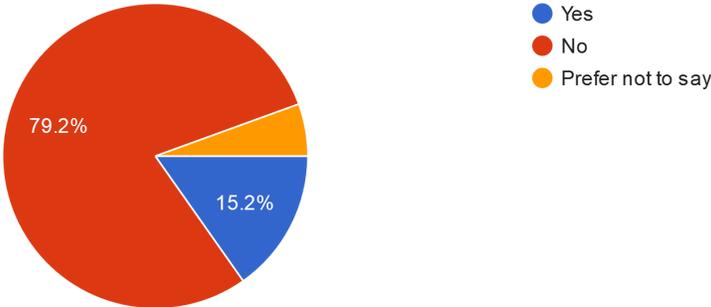
Are you or a member of your household a part of the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community?

361 responses



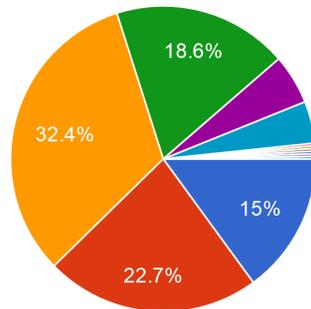
Do you identify as living with a disability?

361 responses



Which area of Ypsilanti do you currently reside in?

361 responses

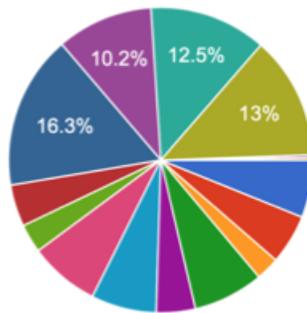


- Ward 1: See map below
- Ward 2: See map below
- Ward 3: See map below
- Ypsilanti Township
- Pittsfield Township
- Superior Township
- Ingham county
- Right outside of ward 1

▲ 1/2 ▼

Which of the following best describes your income in the past 12 months?

361 responses

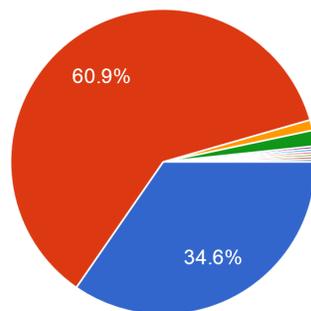


- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 - \$14,999
- \$15,000 - \$19,999
- \$20,000 - \$24,999
- \$25,000 - \$29,999
- \$30,000 - \$34,999
- \$35,000 - \$39,999
- \$40,000 - \$44,999
- \$45,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$74,999
- \$75,000 - \$99,000
- \$100,000 or more

Half of respondents

Which of the following best describes your current housing situation?

361 responses



- I rent my home
- I own my home
- I'm homeless (living on the streets, in...)
- I live with a parent/guardian
- Live with friend
- I want to take this survey without defin...
- Multigenerational living with matriarc...
- I rent apartment from Barnes and bar...

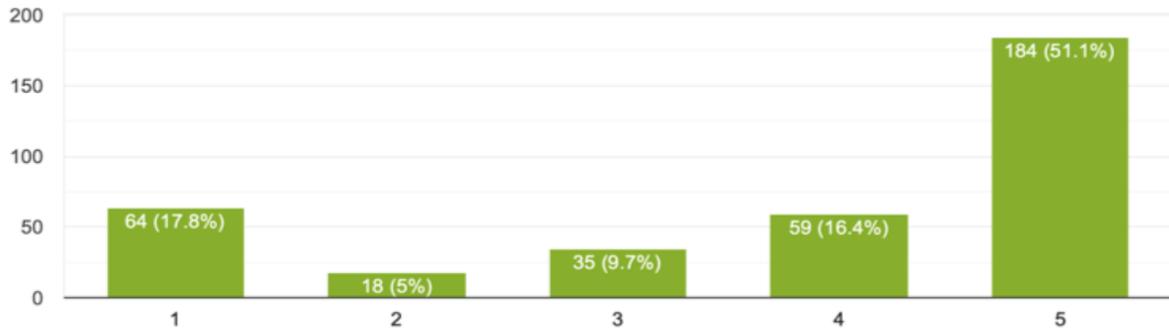
▲ 1/2 ▼

SECTION 1: RENTERS' RIGHTS

1. Protect renters from improper eviction

proposal rating:
360 responses

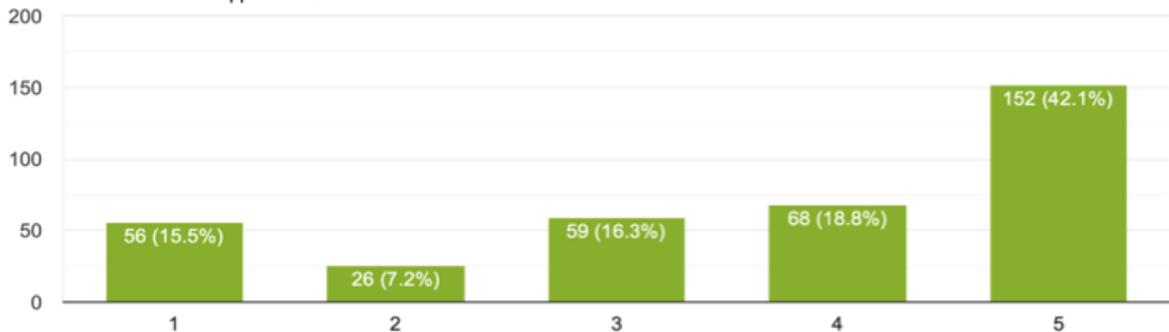
Proposal: Enact a 'Just Cause Eviction' ordinance to protect renters from eviction for an improper reason. Just Cause Eviction statutes protect tenants from wrongful eviction. They limit a landlord's ability to evict tenants to certain reasons, such as failure to pay rent or for violation of the lease terms.



2. Give renters with criminal records a fair chance

proposal rating:
361 responses

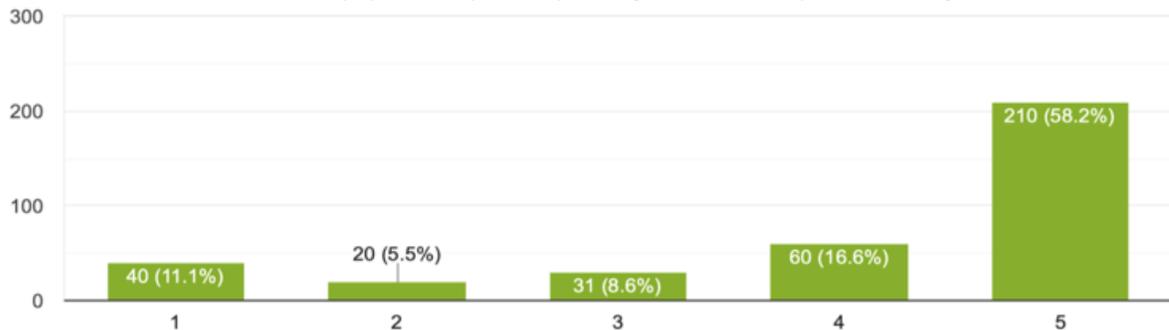
Proposal: Enact a 'Ban the Box'/'Fair Chance' ordinance to protect renters with criminal records by restricting landlords from asking about criminal history on rental applications. Detroit recently decided to Ban the Box in another category: housing. Under Detroit's new ordinance, landlords with portfolios of five or more units are no longer allowed to ask questions about criminal history on housing applications.



3. Give tenants right of first refusal

proposal rating:
361 responses

Proposal: Enact a 'Tenant Right of First Refusal' ordinance that will allow tenants to have a certain notice period and time to purchase their properties, should the owner wish to sell their units. Tenant Right of First Refusal can set in motion a process that transfers property ownership either to residents or to another entity willing to preserve the long-term affordability of the property. It has produced a number of resident-owned properties and partnerships among residents and nonprofits in Washington, DC.



Renters' rights: Priority ranking

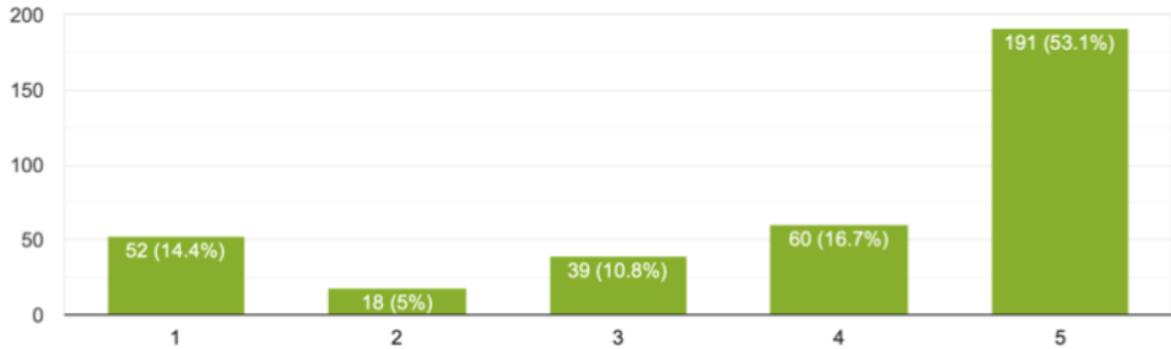
1. Protect against improper eviction (52.7% of respondents)
2. Give tenants right of first refusal to purchase properties (39.6% of respondents)
3. Give renters w/criminal records a fair chance (38.8% of respondents)

SECTION 2: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Build on public land

proposal rating:
360 responses

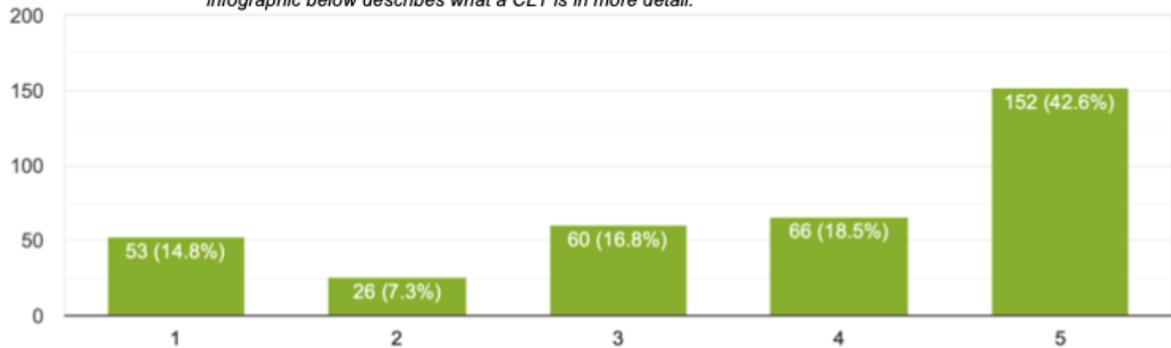
Proposal: *Prioritize using public land for public good—build affordable & accessible housing on the available public lands in the City of Ypsilanti (such as Water St. and 220 N Park). Other possible uses of public land for public good: incentivize construction of an affordable grocery store to address Ypsilanti's food desert, build a recreation center for resident youth and adults, or establish Community Land Trust (see below) on available public land.*



Establish a community land trust

proposal rating:
357 responses

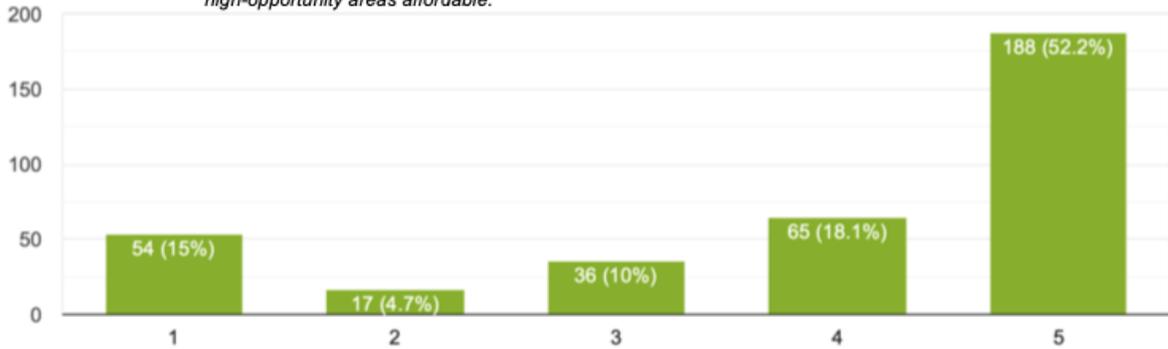
Proposal: *Proposal: Establish a Community Land Trust (CLT) to promote long term housing affordability & accessibility through community control of land. CLTs are nonprofit, community-based organizations designed to ensure community stewardship of land. CLTs combine democratic ownership of land with private ownership of the structure on the land in order to maintain long term housing affordability. CLTs can be interspersed throughout a neighborhood, and can include rental homes and businesses. The infographic below describes what a CLT is in more detail.*



Enact an inclusionary housing ordinance

proposal rating:
360 responses

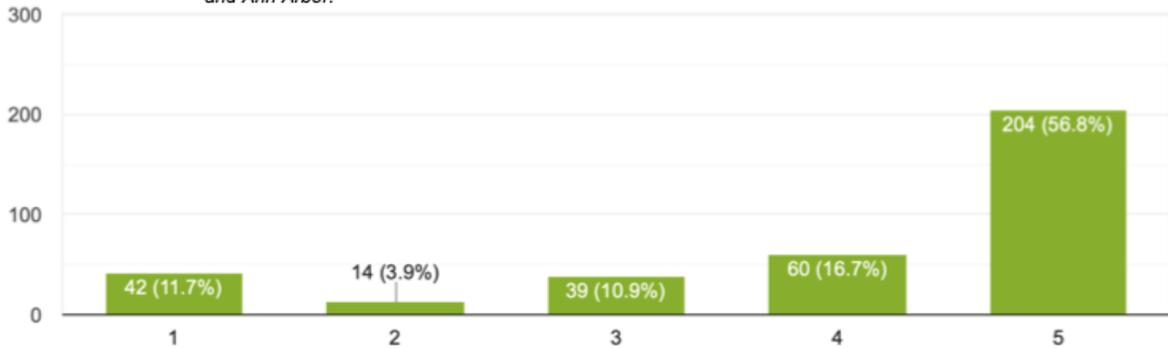
Proposal: Enact an Inclusionary Housing ordinance to require private developers include a certain percentage of units at below market rate. Inclusionary zoning requires (or incentivizes) private developers to designate a certain percentage of the units in a given project as below market rate. In D.C. and around the country, inclusionary housing is an increasingly popular way to produce affordable housing through the private market—it is one of the main tools cities have for maintaining neighborhood diversity, and keeping high-opportunity areas affordable.



Enact an affordability & accessibility ordinance

proposal rating:
359 responses

Proposal: Enact an Affordability & Accessibility Ordinance to 1) Define the parameters for affordable & accessible housing based on Ypsilanti's Area Median Income (AMI) and 2) Require new housing developments to include a percentage of affordable and accessible units based on Ypsilanti's need. An Affordability Ordinance would enhance a future inclusionary housing policy by setting affordability rates based on Ypsilanti's AMI, thus acting in consideration of income disparity and segregation between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor.

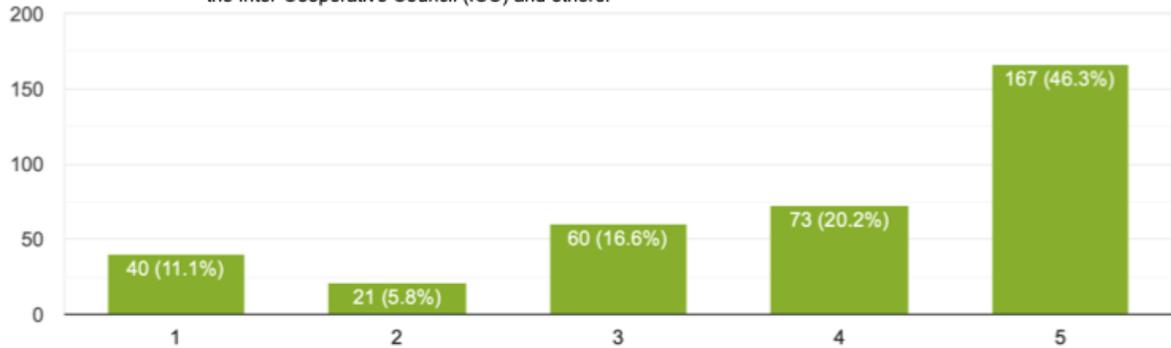


Incentivize co-op conversion

proposal rating:
361 responses

Proposal: Create a legal framework incentivizing co-operative housing conversion and assist tenants in the purchase of rental units for the purposes of creating affordable co-operative housing.

Cooperative housing is a type of home ownership—it is formed when people join on a democratic basis to own or control the housing and/or related community facilities in which they live. Co-operative housing usually includes an apartment building or buildings. Ann Arbor has many co-operative housing options via the Inter-Cooperative Council (ICC) and others.

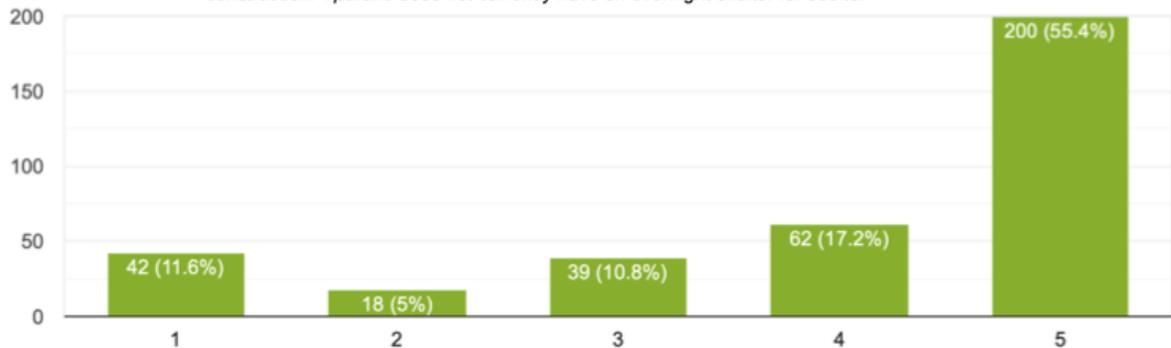


Build a homeless shelter in Ypsilanti

proposal rating:
361 responses

Proposal: Build a shelter in Ypsilanti to help meet needs of residents experiencing homelessness.

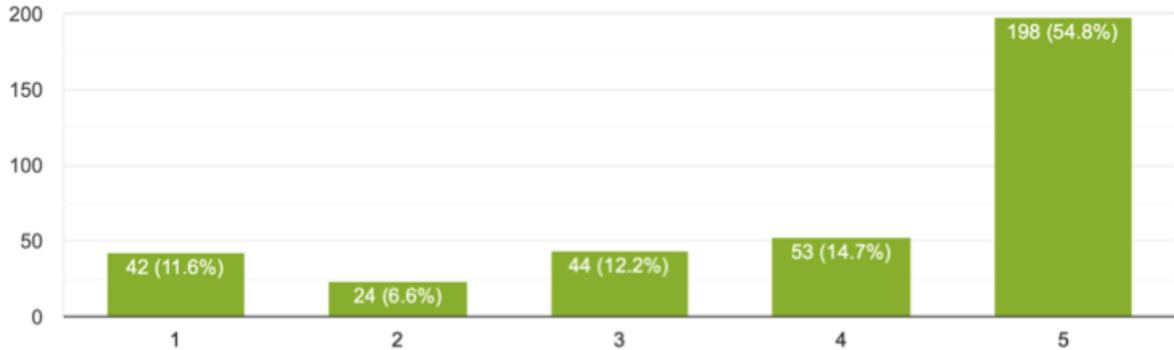
Ann Arbor's homeless shelter, The Delonis Center, has 50 resident beds this year (down from 77 beds in 2018) and is serving a significant percentage of people who identify their last address as being in Ypsilanti. At the same time, reports from Ypsilanti Community Schools and Eastern Michigan University show increased rates of student homelessness. A youth shelter, Ozone House, is currently under new construction. Ypsilanti does not currently have an overnight shelter for adults.



Install public toilets and benches in our parks

proposal rating:
361 responses

Proposal: Install high-quality public toilets and napping benches in our parks for the use of the general public, including residents experiencing homelessness. Ypsilanti also receives the Mental Health & Public Safety millage which could be used to fund projects like these and others that promote the health the safety of residents experiencing homelessness.



Sustainable development: Priority ranking

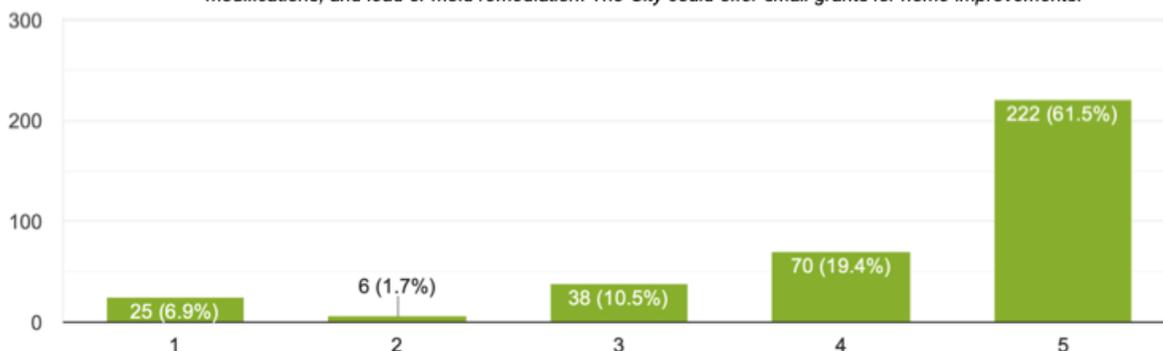
1. Enact an affordability & accessibility ordinance (44.9%)
2. Build a homeless shelter in Ypsilanti (39.9%)
3. Install public toilets and benches in our parks (35.9%)
4. Enact an inclusionary housing ordinance (32.7%)
5. Build on public land (28.9%)
6. Establish a community land trust (27.1%)
7. Incentivize co-op conversion (25.4%)

SECTION 3: NEED-BASED ASSISTANCE

1. Establish a minor home repair program

Proposal: Establish a Minor Home Repair Program to assist with the cost of essential home repairs for eligible low-income and disabled homeowners. Eligible repairs could include roof replacement, plumbing replacement, mechanical or electrical replacements, ADA ramp installation or repair, door modifications, and lead or mold remediation. The City could offer small grants for home improvements.

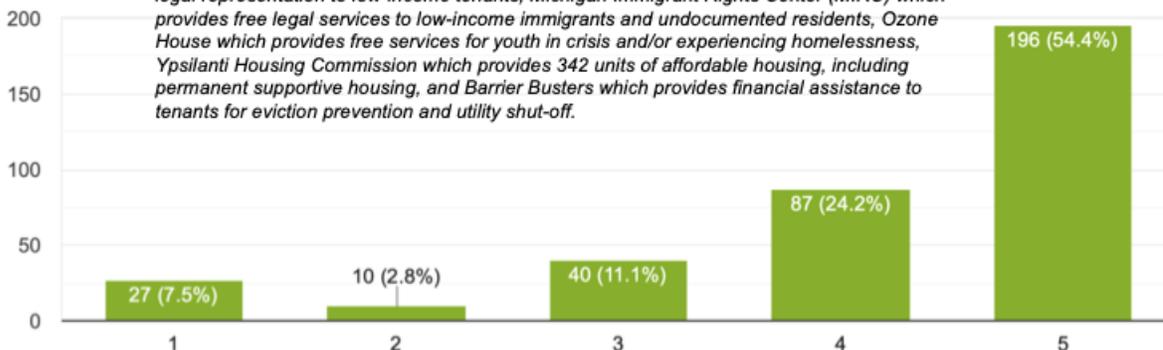
361 responses



2. Fund local agencies that provide need-based assistance

Proposal: Fund local agencies that provide need-based assistance to further expand services and programs to Ypsilanti residents. Agencies that provide need-based assistance include Legal Services of South Central Michigan (LSSCM) which provides free legal representation to low-income tenants, Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC) which provides free legal services to low-income immigrants and undocumented residents, Ozone House which provides free services for youth in crisis and/or experiencing homelessness, Ypsilanti Housing Commission which provides 342 units of affordable housing, including permanent supportive housing, and Barrier Busters which provides financial assistance to tenants for eviction prevention and utility shut-off.

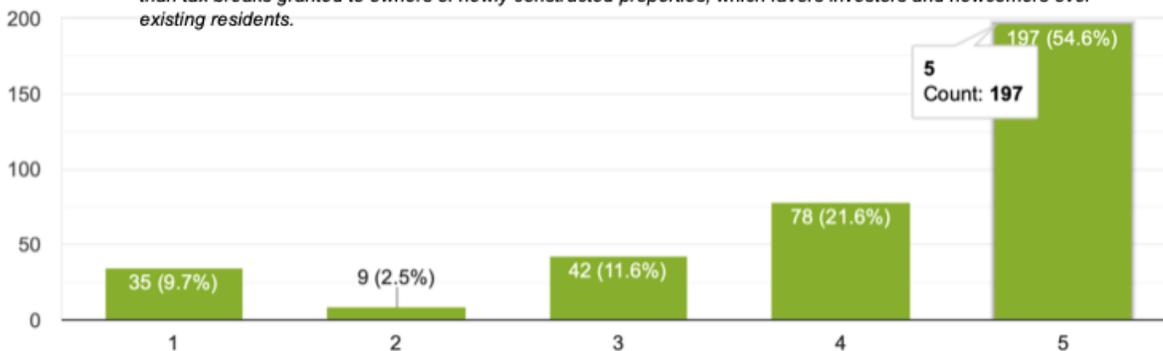
360 responses



3. Allow existing homeowners living South of Michigan Avenue to qualify for same incentives as new homebuyers

Proposal: Modify the policy for the South of Michigan Avenue Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ) to allow existing homeowners to qualify for the same tax breaks as new home-buyers. Under the current City of Ypsilanti NEZ policy, tax breaks granted to homeowners who rehabilitate existing properties are of shorter duration than tax breaks granted to owners of newly constructed properties, which favors investors and newcomers over existing residents.

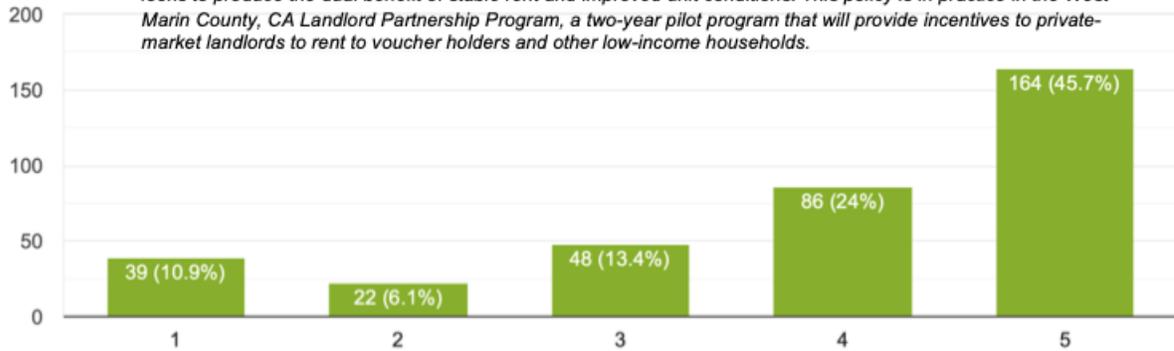
361 responses



4. Create a landlord incentive program to stabilize rent

359 responses

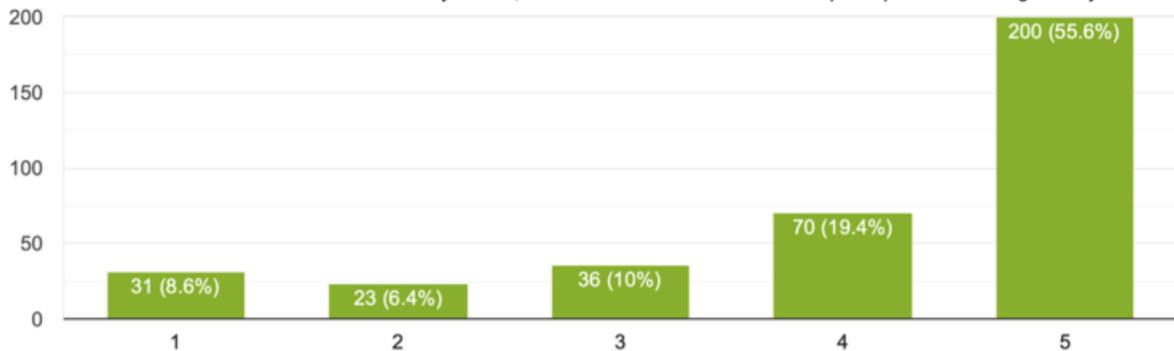
Proposal: Create a landlord incentive program to stabilize rent by offering tax abatement and/or funding for property improvements in exchange of keeping rent stable for a period of time. 70% of Ypsilanti households are renter households, and much of the housing stock in the rental market is older and in disrepair—this program looks to produce the dual benefit of stable rent and improved unit conditions. This policy is in practice in the West Marin County, CA Landlord Partnership Program, a two-year pilot program that will provide incentives to private-market landlords to rent to voucher holders and other low-income households.



5. Assist low-income residents with home buying

360 responses

Proposal: Assist low-income residents who wish to purchase a home by offering credit improvement services, and mortgage down-payment assistance. 70% of households in Ypsilanti are renter households—a significantly higher percentage to comparable college towns of its size. The city could provide assistance to low-income households who wish to buy homes, to reduce barriers to homeownership and promote housing stability.

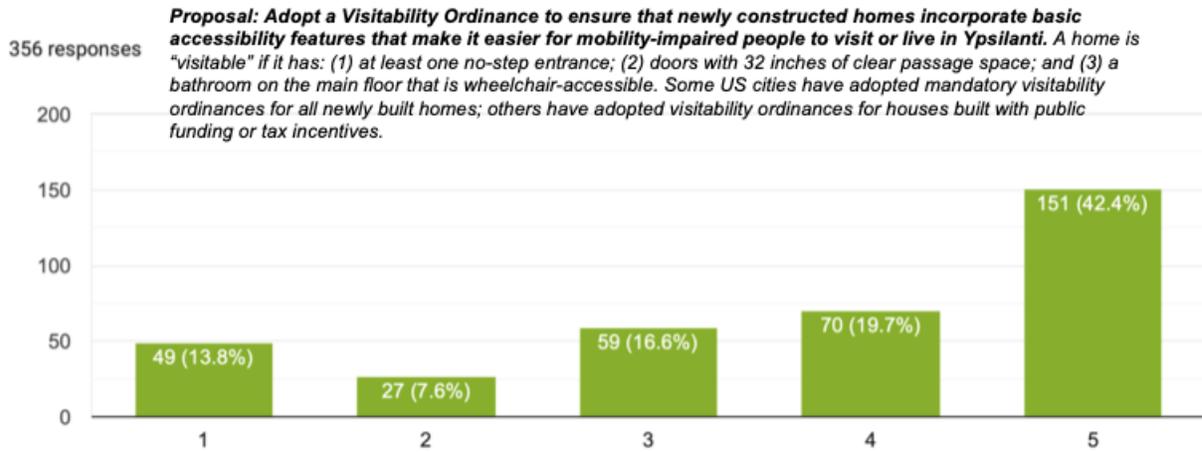


Need-based assistance: Priority ranking

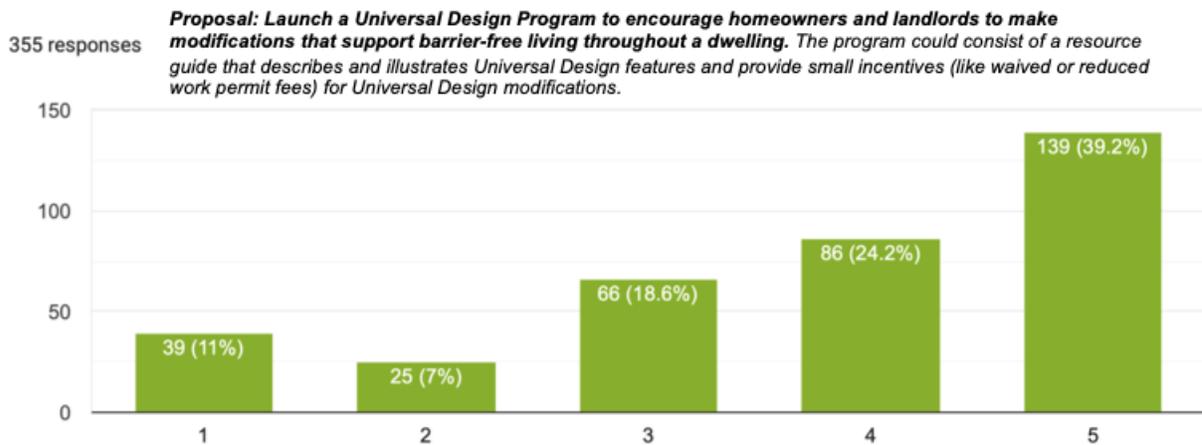
1. Assist low-income residents with home buying (49.1%)
2. Establish a minor home repair program (42.4%)
3. Create a landlord incentive program to stabilize rent (40.9%)
4. Fund local agencies that provide need-based assistance (39.2%)
5. Allow existing homeowners living South of Michigan Avenue to access the same incentives as new homebuyers (32.2%)

SECTION 4: PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

Adopt a visitability ordinance



Launch a universal design program



Physical accessibility: Priority ranking

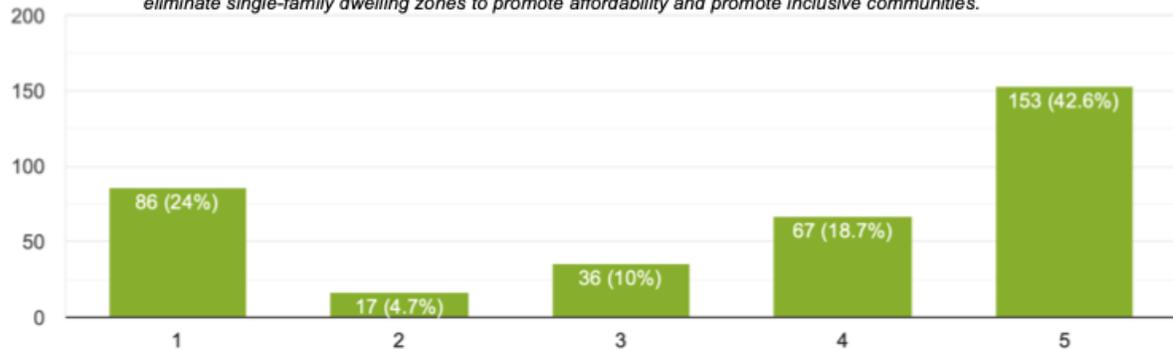
1. Launch a Universal Design program (60.4%)
2. Adopt a visitability ordinance (59.4%)

SECTION 5: ZONING

Change single-family zoning districts to allow 2- or 3-unit homes

Proposal: *Revise the Zoning Ordinance to allow duplexes or triplexes in the Single-Family Residential district to allow for the construction of housing that tends to be more affordable than detached single-family homes. Restriction of multiple family dwellings has historically been a part of race or class segregation strategies in some communities. Some municipalities (such as Minneapolis) have taken action to reduce or eliminate single-family dwelling zones to promote affordability and promote inclusive communities.*

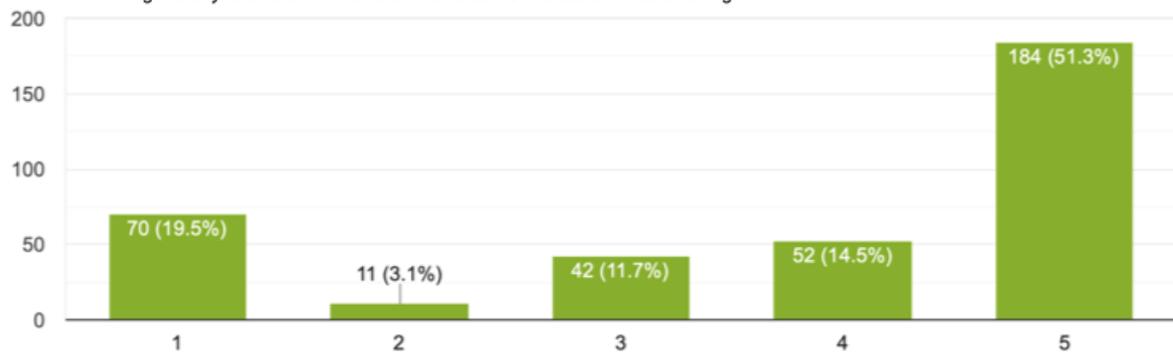
359 responses



Lift limit on non-related persons living in a single dwelling

Proposal: *Increase the number of unrelated individuals who may reside together in a dwelling by revising the Zoning Ordinance definition of a "family". The City of Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance definition of a "family" limits the number of unrelated individuals that may occupy a single dwelling to three. This limit can be increased generally or tied to the number of bedrooms available in that dwelling.*

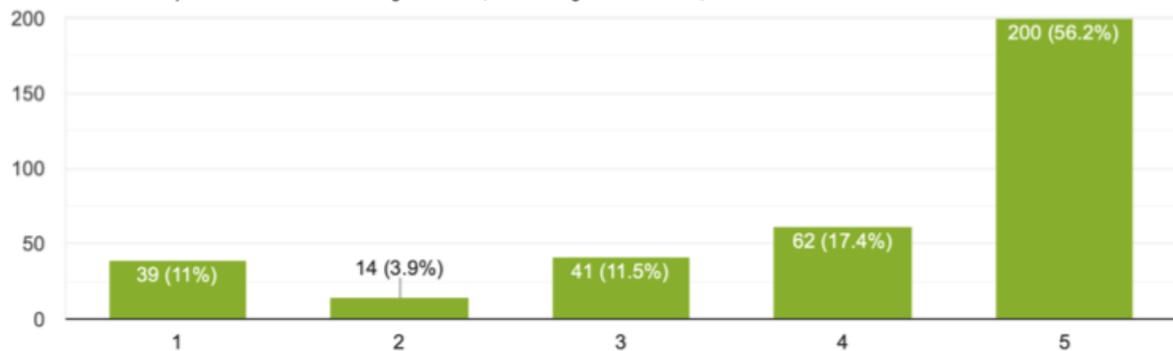
359 responses



Allow accessory dwelling units throughout the City

Proposal: *Revise the zoning ordinance to better accommodate affordable housing in small, independent residences known as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). ADUs can take the form of detached garages, backyard cottages, or basement/attic apartments located on the same lot as an existing residence. Currently ADUs are permitted in the Core Neighborhood, Core Neighborhood-Mid, and Historic Corridor zones.*

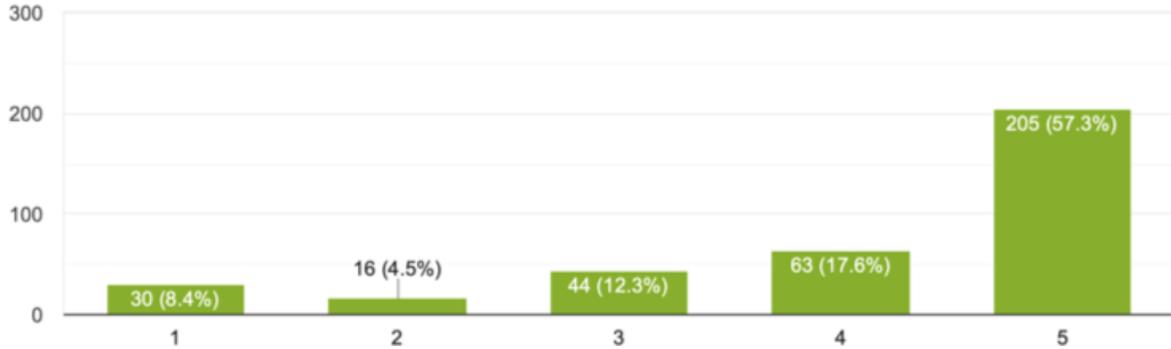
356 responses



Alter zoning ordinance to accommodate tiny homes

358 responses

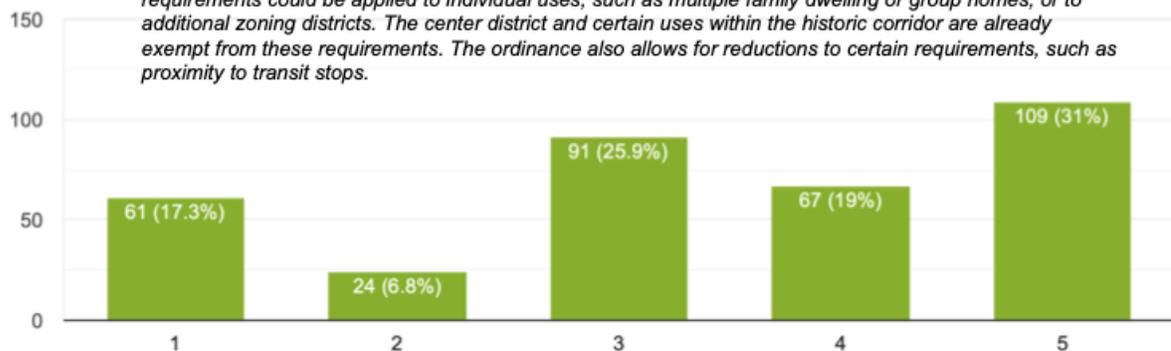
Proposal: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to remove barriers to tiny home construction and occupancy. Tiny homes can provide an affordable alternative to larger, traditional homes. They can come in a variety of styles, many of which are complicated by zoning requirements governing building frontage, lot coverage, and portability.



Change parking space requirement for new housing developments

352 responses

Proposal: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the number of parking spaces required for new housing development or altered housing. Reduction of parking requirements can lower the cost of construction or provide more site-layout options for new or altered housing. Reductions in parking space requirements could be applied to individual uses, such as multiple family dwelling or group homes, or to additional zoning districts. The center district and certain uses within the historic corridor are already exempt from these requirements. The ordinance also allows for reductions to certain requirements, such as proximity to transit stops.

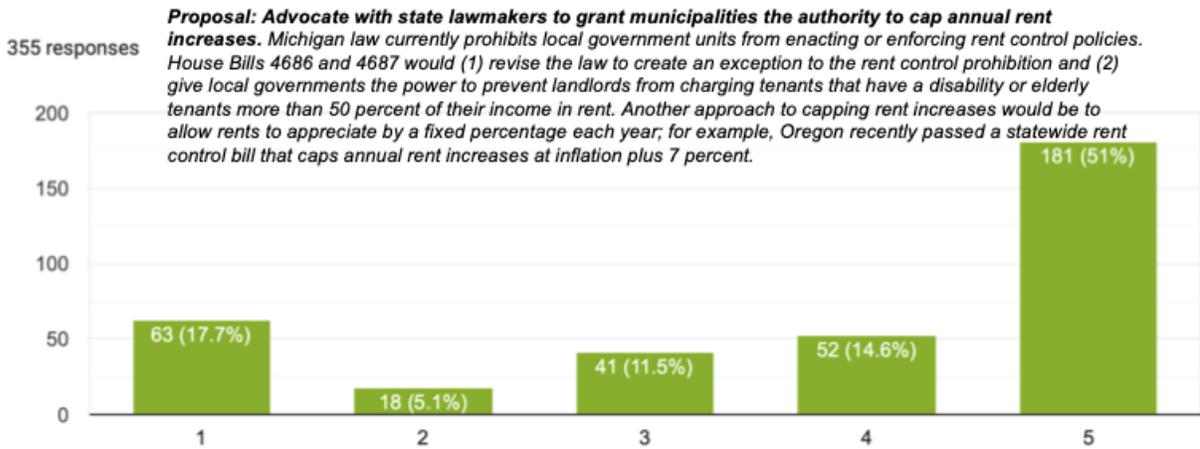


Zoning: Priority ranking

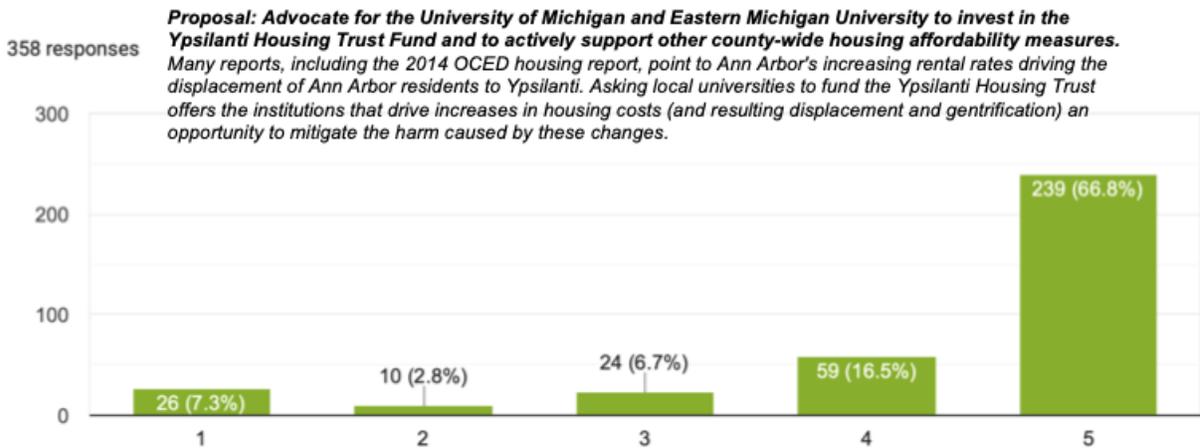
1. Alter zoning ordinance to accommodate tiny homes (52.3%)
2. Lift the limit on non-related persons living in a dwelling (44.6%)
3. Change single-family zoning districts to permit 2- or 3-unit homes (44%)
4. Allow accessory dwelling units throughout the City (39.1%)
5. Change parking space requirement for new housing developments (19%)

SECTION 6: PARTNERSHIP & ADVOCACY

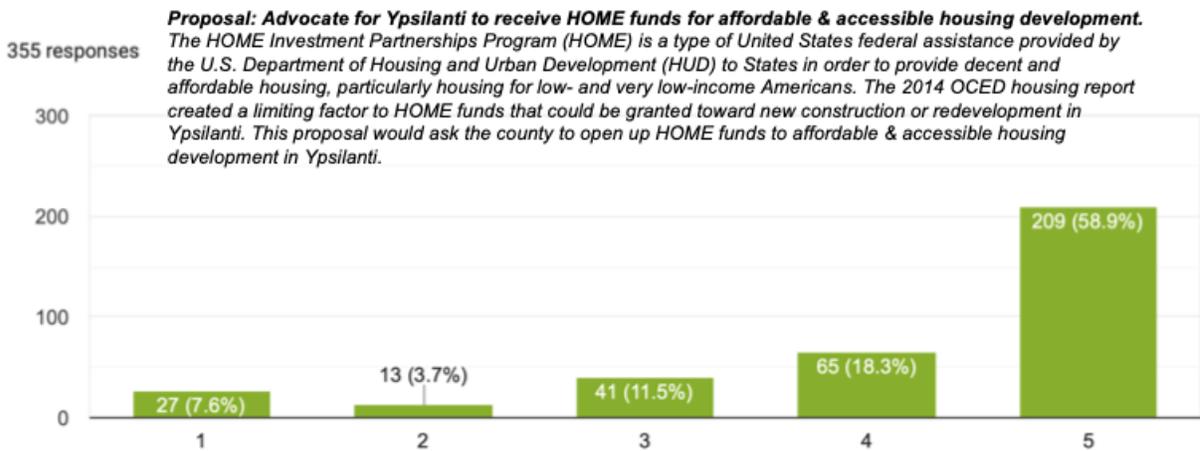
Advocate for rent control legislation



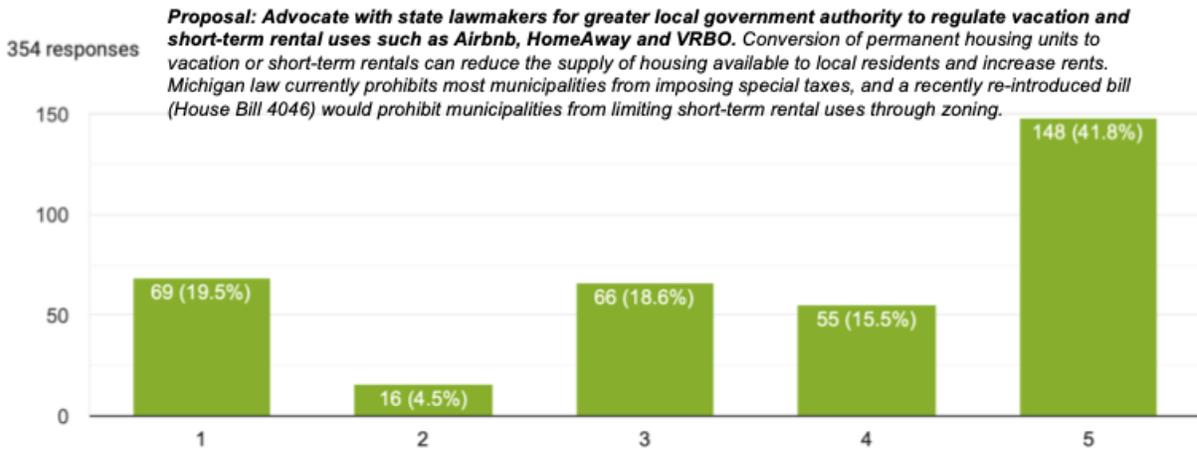
Ask local universities to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust



Ask OCED to fund affordable, accessible housing in Ypsilanti



Advocate for local authority to regulate Airbnb/short-term rentals



Partnership & Advocacy: Priority ranking

1. Ask local universities to invest in the Ypsilanti Housing Trust (54.8%)
2. Advocate for rent control legislation at State level (54.2%)
3. Ask OCED to fund affordable and accessible housing in Ypsilanti (36.7%)
4. Advocate for local authority to regulate Airbnb/short-term rentals (28.2%)

Note on representativeness of survey respondents: Homeowners, white/caucasians, women, and able-bodied people were overrepresented in the survey as compared with census data. Renters, men, Black/African Americans and non-Black people of color, and people with disabilities were underrepresented.

Select comments from survey respondents: Certain themes cropped up in the comments section of the housing survey that advocate for expansion of proposals or alternatives. Zoning, rental stock, accessibility, taxes, and subsidized housing were commented on in particular.

“Multi family zoning has huge economic benefits, and increases accessibility significantly. Progressive cities like Minneapolis have made this move. Ypsilanti could lead and do the same for our community.”

“Ypsilanti has entirely too much rental stock. We need to incentivize single-family homeownership.”

“Re: a homeless shelter in Ypsi, I am wary because other programs have been proven more effective:
1. Supportive Housing for chronically homeless (cheaper and more effective at keeping people housed and out of jail/ER than shelter, Avalon Housing does this work)

2. Dispersed Shelter/ Rapid Rehousing for families and individuals who are not chronically homeless (E.g. this is their first time experiencing homelessness due to a lost job, domestic violence, etc. No history of mental illness, addiction or other "chronically homeless" factors. A lot of homeless people, especially families, fit into this category)."

"There are actually two family shelters in Ypsilanti ran by SOS Community Services, as well as Rapid Rehousing. We know this is not enough to meet the need. The shelters only serve 1 family at a time (a total of 20 families with 70 children per year). "

"At SOS we have noticed a great need for drop-in services like showers and laundry, which I think would be an awesome asset to Ypsi."

"The other thing is that Meals on Wheels has launched an "Aging in place" Home Repair program recently. I would love to see the city support this venture, rather than do their own thing."

"The senior population is ever growing. Affordable senior housing needs priority attention too."
"I advocate for the city to include in their master plan that housing is a human right! Rent control! CLTs! Co-op Conversion! These are so important."

"Right of first refusal and co-op conversions are excellent, but are best accompanied by a means to guarantee financing for any tenants or employees who want to purchase the property and establish a co-op. Right of first refusal is only as good as your ability to buy."

"My strategy: Lower property taxes in City of Ypsilanti."

"There are a *lot more* types of disabilities than just being in a wheelchair!!! The only way you're defining accessibility is through wheelchair access, which is important, but accessibility is greater than that for sure."

Notice of Amendment

Proposed amendment to *The Rules of Procedure and Bylaws of the Planning Commission of the City of Ypsilanti, Michigan as adopted April 17, 2019.*

Article III - Membership, Section 4. to be amended as follows:

Section 4. Each member of the Commission shall avoid conflicts of interest, including, but not limited to, deliberating on, voting on, or reviewing a case concerning the member; the immediate family or household of the member; property owned by or neighboring property owned by the member; or a corporation or partnership in which the member has an ownership, employment, or other financial interest; or when there is a reasonable appearance of a conflict of interest.

For the purposes of this section, a neighboring property shall include any property falling within the 300' notification radius described by Section 103 of the Zoning Act.

Potential conflicts of interest should be identified by the member prior to deliberation of the case. Members shall disclose, except where it violates a confidence, the general nature of the conflict, and the minutes shall so record the conflict and abstention. ~~The member shall remove themselves from the meeting room during deliberation of the case.~~ The member with the conflict of interest may choose to remain in the meeting room, but must abstain from commenting and communicating during the case and its deliberation. Written comments may be transmitted to the Chair and/or City Planner by the member before the meeting, and may be read aloud by the Chair.

Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 22, 2020, 7:00pm – Teleconference Meeting

1. Call to order – The meeting was brought to order at 7:03pm by teleconference. Committee members attending were Jenny Connolly, Renee Echols, Bob Krzewinski, Sarah Walsh, and Jared Walfish. Also attending were Mike Davis (City Planning Commission), Jared Talaga (City Planning Commission) City Public Services Department Project Manager Bonnie Wessler, City Planner Andy Aamodt, and City Clerk Andrew Hellenga.
2. Introductions - Audience participation - Public input - None
3. Guest presentations – None
4. General business
 - a. Agenda approval – Offered By: Committee member Connolly; Seconded By: Committee Member Walsh. Approved: Yes – 5; No – 0.
 - b. Approval of March meeting minutes - Offered By: Committee member Walsh; Seconded By: Committee member Walfish. Approved: Yes – 5; No – 0.
 - c. Bylaws review and Committee status – Bob Krzewinski reported Committee member Lee Stimpson resigned on June 10, 2020, Jared Talaga’s term ended May 31, 2020 but will still be assisting the Committee, Mike Davis will be taking the place of Jared Talaga as Planning Commission liaison to the Committee (to be formally approved at the next Planning Commission meeting) and Renee Echols who’s nomination to serve on the Committee was approved by the Planning Commission at its June 17, 2020 meeting. Also City resident Diana Gonzalez is interested in serving on the Committee pending Planning Commission approval).
 - d. Proposed Committee by-laws change – Quorum needed for meetings – After discussion, a motion was made by Committee member Krzewinski; Seconded by Committee member Connolly to amend the Committee bylaws to add item 2.d to read “A quorum shall consist of a majority of the current Committee members”. Approved: Yes – 5; No – 0. This bylaws addition will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for their approval.
5. Old & continuing business
 - a. 2020 Committee priorities
 1. City Non-Motorized Plan – Committee members will meet with Bonnie Wessler and Jared Talaga in July to work towards a final draft of the Plan Update to be presented to the Committee at its next meeting. Bob Krzewinski will survey possible meeting times.
 2. Sidewalk curb cut inventory & improvements
 - Curb Cut Priority List – Draft list of recommended curb cuts discussed with any further recommendations or revisions to Bob Krzewinski by Friday, June 26th at noon as the list will be forwarded to City Public Services Department that afternoon.
 3. Pedestrian Improvements – (Signage, road markings, permanent radar speed signs at select locations, Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon, traffic calming. Concentrate on where most pedestrian activity occurs)
 - Continue current efforts with MDOT on in-City State Route pedestrian improvements (i.e. Huron, West Cross, Washtenaw, Hamilton, Michigan). Bonnie Wessler reported Huron/Hamilton/Washtenaw rebuilding with non-motorized improvements (including the bridge on Huron over I-94) on track for 2022 construction by the Michigan Department of Transportation.
 - Install permanent (i.e. solar powered) radar speed signs at locations with a high incidence of speeding (i.e. southbound Prospect south of Holmes, Mansfield both directions near schools) – No new updates.
 4. Bike Lanes
 - Spring repainting of existing bike lanes - No new updates.

5. Communication & Education
 - Publish quarterly Non-Motorized Committee newsletter – Summer edition to be published in July.
 - Review City Council, Planning Commission, Sustainability Commission agendas for possible Committee input at their meetings – Continues to be done by Bob Krzewinski
 - Spring/summer safety education program for both motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists – Bob Krzewinski will work on publicizing motorists giving cyclists 3 feet of clearance.
 - Sidewalk/Curb Cut vegetation (summer) snow removal (winter) promotion by Committee – Facebook/Nextdoor social media posts to neighborhood groups from Committee urging summer trim-backs of sidewalk vegetation.
6. Non-Motorized City budget – Determine yearly, non-motorized project funding amount available. Committee involvement in CIP review and non-motorized project funding disbursement decisions. - No new updates.
7. Neighborhood Connectors - Low-speed street which has been "optimized" for bicycle & walking traffic. Potential projects: Adams (Cross to Forest), Pearl (Hamilton to Mansfield), 2nd Avenue (Michigan to Watling). Mike Davis and Bob Krzewinski will do some bicycle scouting trips over the next month of possible Connector routes. A map of a potential Ypsilanti Neighborhood Connector routing is at https://drive.google.com/open?id=18-2nSj-R_T2goLtaSWfzF6Alyza1yv7&usp=sharing
8. Border To Border (B2B) Trail gap completion and enhancement.
 - Support City and Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission efforts to complete the Trail through the City – Groundbreaking event was held the afternoon for June 22 with construction starting by the end of June.
 - Install “State Law – Stop For Pedestrians In Crosswalk” signs at mid-block B2B Trail crossing of Cornell Street between Collegewood and Mayhew - No new update.
9. Bike & Walk Friendly Communities
 - Submit Walk Friendly Community application when Non-Motorized Plan update complete
 - Bike Friendly Community (BFC) award recertification (current BFC award expires in November 2021) – At the next meeting action should start taking place to form a subcommittee to reapply in November 2021. Bike Friendly Community application information is at <https://bikeleague.org/content/about-bfc-application-process> (click on “Returning Applicants” for background information). For the actual application download (in Word) visit https://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/BFC_Application_Fall_2020.docx
 - Bike Friendly Business program drive – No new updates.
10. Events & Community Outreach – EMU August 1st Bike Rodeo, Parkridge Festival. Seek grants for helmet giveaways for events the Committee is at. - EMU Bike Rodeo is Saturday, August 1st, 9am to noon at Gene Butman Ford, 2105 Washtenaw Avenue. Bob Krzewinski will have a Committee table at the Bike Rodeo and additional volunteers would be helpful. Parkridge Festival in late August is cancelled due to the pandemic in 2020. Grants for helmets at outreach events still needed.
11. Safe Routes To School – Group reorganizing in the Ypsilanti area.
 - b. Parkridge, Frog Island, Senior Center bike repair stations – Bonnie Wessler ordered these racks through a City grant. EMU looking at donating the existing bike repair station at the old College of Business downtown and moving it to either the AAATA Transit Center or the downtown Library.
 - c. Pedestrian Crossing Legislation – Michigan HB 4738 (Representative Ronnie Peterson) – No new action on this legislation since June 20, 2019. Unless approved, legislation will die when the current Michigan legislature adjourns by the end of 2020.
 - d. Other – Bonnie Wessler is looking at the possibility of creating some short term demonstration projects in the City and was gauging interest from the Committee. Both Renee Echols and Bob Krzewinski were interested. Bob Krzewinski mentioned Chelsea is involved in such a project now (<http://www.miwats.org/watsblog/2020/6/19/a-tactical-urbanism-demonstration-project>).

6. New Business

- a. Planning - Public Services Departments update – Seasonal speed bumps are being installed in mid to late June due to pandemic staffing problems earlier in the year at Public Services.
 - b. Bonnie Wessler is looking at the possibility of creating some short term demonstration projects in the City and was gauging interest from the Committee. Both Renee Echols and Bob Krzewinski were interested. Bob Krzewinski mentioned Chelsea is involved in such a project now (<http://www.miwats.org/watsblog/2020/6/19/a-tactical-urbanism-demonstration-project>).
7. Other Items – Announcements – Next meeting – Going back to the traditional meeting date (1st Thursday) would involve a meeting close to July 4th when many will be out of town. With that in mind the next scheduled meeting will be Thursday, August 6, 7pm.
8. Adjournment - Offered By: Committee member Connolly; Seconded By: Committee Member Walfish. Approved: Yes – 4; No – 0. Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

City Of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee
Draft - June 2020 Curb Cut Recommendations

1. S. Grove and Spring – <https://goo.gl/maps/4EdmqztHFrECX1Cy7> - <https://goo.gl/maps/cynRqeWHdAEcrHMx9> (Streetview SE) - <https://goo.gl/maps/QbzECXTNCzNKNKN57> (Streetview NE)
 - Primary problem: Non-ADA compliant on northeast and southeast sides of intersection. New ADA compliant ramps are planned for the northwest/northeast sides of the intersection in conjunction with Border To Border Trail construction.
2. Bellevue between Roosevelt and Whittier - <https://goo.gl/maps/7sKU4qG1zmkv2fJM9> (Streetview)
 - Primary problem: Curb cut on west side of Bellevue between Roosevelt & Whittier (sidewalk travels from Bellevue west to Hewitt)
 - Secondary problems: No curb cut on east side of Bellevue between Roosevelt & Whittier. Also recommend construction to fill sidewalk gap on east side of Bellevue between Roosevelt & Whittier
3. Collegewood and North Mansfield - <https://goo.gl/maps/jLeXzwShGHAU7XCm9>
 - Primary problem: No curb cuts on northwest and northeast sides of intersection
 - Secondary problem: Existing curb cuts on southwest & southeast sides of intersection in poor shape
4. Chidister and Spring – <https://goo.gl/maps/VTcbQj8fTT1ASxMj8> - <https://goo.gl/maps/mxezLKnCHeB8Hn9Q7> (Streetview)
 - Primary problem: Non-ADA compliant on north side of Spring
5. Catherine and Spring - <https://goo.gl/maps/qYsVQP4muhgZBTFY6> - <https://goo.gl/maps/eAoHZidSyzE8QwSH9> (Streetview)
 - Primary problem: Non-ADA compliant on north side of Spring
6. Casler and Spring - <https://goo.gl/maps/VkscmaDegsCBppbbA> - <https://goo.gl/maps/BydvqxZPykVBwe7Y6> (Streetview)
 - Primary problem: Non-ADA compliant on north side of Spring
 - Secondary problem: Utility pole obstructs sidewalk on north side of Spring, west of Casler
7. Bell and Spring - <https://goo.gl/maps/RoG5nvgEeZV4Q5d99>
 - Primary problem: Non-ADA compliant on north side of Spring
8. Second and Jefferson - <https://goo.gl/maps/tuLfU9vWzRwXHqA37> - <https://goo.gl/maps/skZoZFv1E26YW7NB9> (Streetview)
 - Primary problem: Curb cut needed on west side of Second to connect housing area through opening in fence with Jefferson
9. Second and Madison - <https://goo.gl/maps/E55trWdzeNzAisoY8> (Streetview)
 - Primary problem: ADA curb cuts needed on east side of Second
10. Second and Small Place - <https://goo.gl/maps/Mro3FmVFtXGpuEKo6>
 - Primary problem: Curb cuts needed to cross Second from Small Place sidewalks
11. Second and Frederick - <https://goo.gl/maps/rD75jWiGD5EW3qCY8>
 - Primary problem: Curb cuts needed to cross Second from Frederick
12. Pearl at Adams - <https://goo.gl/maps/gS6xgwz4xyGoeKoWA> (Streetview looking south)
 - Primary problem: SE corner doesn't have bumps or color changes

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

BIKE RODEO



FREE EVENT! | SAT. AUG. 1, 2020
9 A.M.- 12 P.M. | GENE BUTMAN FORD
2105 WASHTENAW AVENUE

FREE SAFETY CHECK

- Mechanical check
- Helmet fitting

FREE STUFF

- Child helmet giveaway

FUN TIMES

- Rules of the road
- Practice skills
- Learn to bike safely
- Food and drinks will be provided



EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Office of Admissions

